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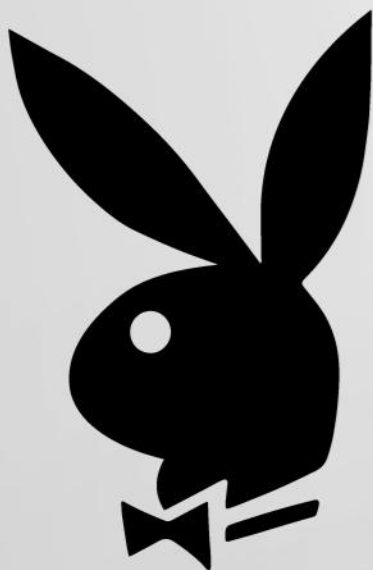
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PLAYBOY





With Wine, It's Always Half Full

In the second column of our new Philosophy of Pleasure series, New York Times best-selling author Mychal Denzel Smith writes on the love and compassion in a generous pour

BY MYCHAL DENZEL SMITH



Like many people who have been raised by pop culture, I've always had ideas about romance that revolve around the "grand gesture." Whether it's surprising your partner (or the person you want to be your partner) with a big-money purchase—a diamond or car or house—or risking life and limb to run through airport security to inform them you've quit your job so you can be together a thousand miles from home, the grand gesture supposedly shows great sacrifice, and we're led to believe that love is only as meaningful as the sacrifices we are willing to make for it.

Like anyone who has grown critical of the messages they have received from pop culture, I know that's all bullshit. Not because I'm a millennial who can't (and probably will never be able to) afford a diamond or car or house, but because I have lived and grown, loved and lost. I know love can't be held or nurtured by moving from grand gesture to grand gesture, constantly sacrificing without taking the time to ask what you're sacrificing toward. Love is a practice.

But what does that practice look like? That's something I'm still learning. I was in a relationship a few years ago that showed me I didn't know, and, as a result, I fucked it up in a major way (a topic for another time). I'm in a different relationship now, and I feel loved like I never have before—in ways I didn't think possible or thought myself unworthy of. Naturally, I want to reciprocate that love, and figuring out how is something that confounds me every day.

**Wine is already a
staple of romance.
It's built for it. It
stops time.**

Our relationship has largely flourished during the pandemic lockdown, which has meant practically all of our time together has been spent at home, where we talk intimately, watch movies, read alongside each other, share meals and drink lots of wine.

I had a passable knowledge of wine before we started dating—enough to know I liked having a bottle of Montepulciano around and that the most perfect pairing in the world is fried chicken and sauvignon blanc. (The bright crispness of a sauvignon blanc cuts through the fatty richness of the fried chicken, and, since it's a drier white wine, you aren't completely coating your mouth from bite to sip in a way that will feel soggy and overwhelming. They are in harmonious balance.) But the world of wine is so vast and varied that it can be intimidating for the uninitiated to jump in. Most of us are going to stick with the most popular styles and probably be content with never knowing if we've picked the right vintage.

My partner will say she's not an expert, but she has definitely explored more than I have. In the days before we felt safe venturing outside of our respective apartments to see each other, she had a box of different wines delivered to me. It was sweet, and not only because I needed all the wine I could get to soothe the paranoia of living through a pandemic that was claiming more and more lives every day (and still, infuriatingly, is). It was a way to share her interest and learn her quirks by tasting and talking about the flavors she was drawn to.

Wine is already a staple of romance. It's built for it. I don't mean to suggest other alcoholic drinks aren't; you should go with whatever moves you. But wine lingers in a way beer doesn't and moves a bit slower than liquor. It stops time. You sip, you laugh, you pour a bit too much, but a good wine doesn't rush its seduction. It's meant for those moments before you gaze into each other's eyes—before the first passionate kiss and after the third, before you feel the courage to say it but know it's coming and suddenly blurt out, "I love you."

I'm still searching for the ways to practice love, fearful that I will come up short. But one thing I've learned is that I can pick out a nice wine for us to share. To pair with our roast duck dinner at Christmas, I chose a Barolo from Massolino—their 2014 vintage. (This can be confusing, but know that "vintage" isn't about the age of the wine; it means all the grapes came from that year, likely because the producer felt it was a particularly good harvest.) I almost chose a Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which has become a favorite of both of ours since it's a bold but still versatile red with the right amount of tannins without being too dry. But I prepared the duck with rum glaze, which meant it was going to be on the sweet side, and the Barolo has earthier, more mineral notes that I thought would give us a complementary and balanced flavor profile. For New Year's, we had a big bowl of popcorn and a bottle of Ruinart blanc de blancs (meaning it's a champagne made from all white grapes). We sat on the couch being thankful that 2020 had at least given us each other, but giving space to our cautious hope that 2021 would give us all back what Covid (and governmental cruelty and indifference) had stolen away.

In those moments, she was happy. I'd like to think she knew she was loved. Not because of the wine itself, but because what I hoped to express with it. Love is practice, and that practice is in listening, learning and sharing. I wanted to show I was thinking about her—what she likes and what brings her pleasure. It's too reductive to say it's in the "little things." These things are not little by any stretch. They're the foundation. They're the things we do every day, whether there's a glass of wine in front of us or not.



Let's Play With Tove Lo

The Swedish pop star tells us all about her “Disco Tits”

BY **EVE BARLOW**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **FELISHA TOLENTINO**

Swedish pop singer-songwriter Tove Lo is incapable of self-censorship; we've seen this since she first emerged, in 2013, with the addictive single “Habits (Stay High).” She has spent the past four years conquering ever-larger stages, often with only glitter covering her nipples, kitting out her house-infused synth pop with unfiltered lyrics about sex, drugs and hard-won self-discovery. The result: a bracing new paradigm of how women in pop can present themselves. In addition to co-writing for artists including Lorde, Nick Jonas and Ellie Goulding, Lo takes charge behind the scenes, funding her own films to accompany 2016's *Lady Wood*

album. That title, by the way, is a female twist on the male anatomy; her new album, *Blue Lips*, is another cheeky reversal. Both suggest insatiable appetites—a theme borne out by the new album's lead single, “Disco Tits,” whose video depicts Lo in flagrante with a yellow bug-eyed puppet. Therein lies a key weapon in her arsenal: “It's rare to make fun of female sexuality,” she says. “Naked dudes in movies can be sexy or funny, but not women. I like to play with that.” Having recently turned 30, with new music and a new love in the mix, Lo feels reborn. “I made it to this!” she says with a laugh. “I'm whole.”









LADY IN RED

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Congrats on your Playboy Sweden Feature! What does this mean to you? I'm so grateful for this opportunity. It's so amazing to be a part of something that has empowered women for years.

What do you think of when it comes to Playboy and the iconic bunny? I think of all the incredible and beautiful women who have graced the covers and pages before me. These women are obviously sexy, but they're also powerful and have paved the way for others.

What comes to mind when you think of Sweden? I'm a huge metal fan. So when I think of Sweden I think of all the awesome metal bands I love that are from there. I enjoy all music though, and a lot of amazing artists come from Sweden.

Tell us about your background... what is your ethnicity? I'm mixed. My mom's side is Mexican and Native American. My dad's is Greek and Hungarian.

Where were you born? Where do you live now? I'm from Los Angeles. I currently live in Las Vegas.

What's your favorite color? Blue and teal.

Do you prefer the beach or the pool? Definitely the beach.

Read the book or watch the movie? Both.

What is your favorite body part on you? on him? I'd say my legs. And on him, strong arms.

What attracts you the most in a man? Playfulness and confidence.

Biggest turn-off? Bad personal hygiene.

If you could be any animal, what would you be and why? I would be a house cat so I could understand my cat better. I'd also want to see what my cat does throughout the day and what his life is like from his perspective.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I see myself running a successful business and happily married with kids living my dream life.





A woman with long brown hair is lying on her back on a bright blue inflatable shark-shaped pool float. She is wearing a white short-sleeved lace top and green patterned swim bottoms. She is looking up at the camera with a slight smile. The float is on a lush green lawn. A large white number '20' is overlaid on the left side of the image, with thin white curved lines around it.

20

WRITTEN BY **DAVID RENSIN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PETER YANG**

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a person's legs and lower torso. The person is lying on a bright blue inflatable pool ring on a lush green lawn. Their legs are bent at the knees and spread apart. A sharp shadow of the person is cast onto the grass to their left. The text 'Aubrey Plaza' is overlaid in large white font across the center of the image.

Aubrey Plaza

TV's favorite dark princess drops her "Botox deadpan" glare and tells all about Chris Pratt, defends Charlie Sheen and dreams about a life of crime

Q1: *When you began filming the final season of Parks and Recreation, your TV husband, Chris Pratt (who plays Andy), had in real life just anchored last year's biggest movie Guardians of the Galaxy. How did success go to the head of one of the nicest guys around?*

He forgot my name, which is the weirdest thing about the whole situation. I guess when you're the star of a Marvel movie and super, super famous and you're flown all over the world, you meet so many people that your ability to pay attention is gone. So yeah, he forgot my name. I mean my real name, not my character April on the show. I had to keep reminding him, and he'd say, "Oh, right. Right, right." But I don't fault him, because being a movie star is hard. They say that movie stars meet 60 times more people than the average person, so of course your brain gets cloudy. I don't hold that against him. I think he's great. *[laughs]*

None of that is true, by the way. You told me it would be okay to lie. Chris did not forget my name. He's the kindest, most amazing person ever, and he didn't change a bit except that his fucking body is ripped beyond belief. He's the same old lovable golden retriever of a man I had to hug and touch and kiss a lot—because it's my job. I just tried to make the best of it.

Q2: *Here's a question from one of your Parks and Recreation cast mates. "When one examines your talent, beauty and humor, not to mention your excellent many teeth, it is quite apparent that you have entered into a bargain with Lucifer. What services did the Dark Father require of you in exchange for your winning glammers?"*

That's like a backhanded compliment. You're not going to tell me who? Oh, wait, I know. This is from Satan himself, the Dark Lord, Nick Offerman. We have an evil connection. It's a very good question. The Dark Father required many things of me: the blood of a thousand infants, the teeth of a thousand corpses. I have it all written down on my iPad.

Q3: *Does Nick require that you be as fearless as he is when it comes to getting or playing a part?*

Do you mean having sex with people to get a part? We're similar in that way too. He taught me that. He was one of the first people out here who told me you have to have sex with the most people you can, especially the ones who make decisions, and I said okay. You don't even have to confine it to business. Use sex to get whatever you're trying to get.

Q4: *You're TV's modern queen of the deadpan look. Do you have a favorite?*

A dead-eyes stare. No eyebrow movement, no facial creases at all; you just stare right into someone's soul—the Botox deadpan.

Q5: *You're named after a song by Bread. When you think of bread, what kind comes to mind?*

Just a straight-up bag of Wonder Bread. I would never buy that now, but I grew up on it, and Spaghettios and hot dogs and stuff like that.

Q6: *You went to an all-girls Catholic high school. Defend single-sex education.*

I loved it. I would send my kid to an all-girls school. Some people say it's no good, that it's not the real world and girls won't learn how to interact normally. I disagree. At that age it was helpful to eliminate the distraction of guys in school. I like uniforms. I didn't have to think about dressing myself or how I looked. I just focused on the important stuff. It made me more confident in the classroom.

Q7: *Is show business conducive to long-term love relationships?*

Oh, God, I don't think so, not from what I can see, and I look very hard for it. I'm curious about that. Whenever I meet a married couple who are in the business, I always ask them a million questions to figure out what's really going on, because

"Twitter's Evil. It's a place for people to bully and be mean to others."

I don't know how that's going to work out. For a successful actor there are lots of choices and temptations. We're all just human. Actors are like con artists. We want to make a memorable impression. Amy Poehler once gave me good advice. She said when someone is charming, it's an action. Charm is a verb, not a quality.

Q8: *You've said that you admire Charlie Sheen and Bill Murray because they're unapologetic about who they are. Do you aspire to be part of that tradition?*

Famous people get lots of stuff projected on them and feel constantly judged. It can take a toll. Charlie and Bill, both of whom I've worked with, don't seem affected by fame or status. They are who they are. I don't even aspire to fame. I just want to work and not let anything else affect me. But I'm only human, so sometimes I care too much—or too little—about what others think.

Q9: *We read that you wanted to play Dr. Bruce "the Hulk" Banner's cousin, superhero She-Hulk. Given all the garment rending, describe her wardrobe options.*

I don't know if I was sober when I said that, but I would like that part. Give it to me. It would be fun to play a sexy scientist who gets really angry and can then do anything she wants. I would like to be wearing a sexy business-casual outfit that rips when I get big and then I'm wearing—I don't know, maybe a sports bra and some boy shorts? Something sporty so I can run around and fuck shit up. Or maybe a slip, some kind of undergarments but keeping it classy.

Q10: *Is it true you once kissed Patrick Stewart on the mouth?*

Yes. He was at the American Comedy Awards. Amy Poehler and I were sitting at the table, and we knew we were going to win for best comedy series, but we were the only people there from our cast. We had to go on stage alone and didn't have a bit—which we realized once the awards were being given out everyone else had. So Amy and I were drinking and trying to figure out what to do, and she came up with the idea to ask a bunch of random people to stand up and go on stage with us and pretend they were in our cast. Patrick was one.

He was a really good sport. They called our names, and Amy and I stood up. He stood up. We kissed him on the mouth, held hands and ran up on stage. Amy made a big speech about how Patrick was a writer for our show and they were bumping him up to cast member because he'd been so good. He totally played along and was awesome.

Q11: *When you read mean tweets about yourself, is it no big deal or is it painful?*

I have read tweets in the past, but I've stopped. It bothered me. Twitter is evil. It's a place for people to bully and be mean to others. I think it would bother anyone.

Q12: *Okay, but you're on Twitter.*

Yeah, but not to read about myself. I've created a Twitter persona, @evilhag. That's also how I do talk shows. It's a version of me but not really me. It's a character. Sometimes I'll do a sincere thing, but mostly it's just a waste of my life and my brain energy, so I'm getting off it. Okay? I'm going to get off it right now. I can't do it anymore. [pauses, looks at her iPhone] But I have so many followers. No, it just feels like drugs. But the more followers you get, you're like, Oh, shit, people like me. It feels good. [pauses] I guess I'm not going to quit.

Q13: *You once told Conan O'Brien a story about stealing a paper from the desk of Vice President Joe Biden when he gave you a tour of the White House. How surprised are you that you didn't choose a life of crime?*

Very. If I weren't an actor, maybe I'd be a criminal. I would love to rob a bank. You know, just stickin' it to the man. The rush of the heist. In fact, I might do it—but in an old-timey kind of way, like Bonnie and Clyde. Banks today are probably too hard to rob because they're all futuristic. But I would be the cool robber. I would have a side conversation with the person I'm robbing: "I'm cool. I'm not going to hurt you." I would develop a relationship with them and make them emotionally invested in me. Then I would rob them again.

Q14: *What's your theory of career management?*

Don't trust anyone. Have no loyalty to anyone, no matter who they are. Never do anything for money. Honestly, I just try to make good choices. The most important thing is to focus on the actual art and the work and try to block out all the noise when you're making a decision. I have moments of weakness when I see dollar signs and try to convince myself a certain role could be a good thing for me but I know deep down that it isn't. You have to follow your gut. You can't be distracted by competition and comparing yourself to others.

Q15: Showers or baths?

I like to take a bath every day or I feel weird. I like to put some stuff in the water and make a little potion, then zone out. Sometimes I take a shower before I get in, but mostly I just sit there by myself and think about all my regrets and the bad choices I've made.

Q16: *Many of the Parks and Recreation cast have written books: Amy Poehler, Nick Offerman, Aziz Ansari, Rob Lowe. Are you feeling the pressure?*

Well, I am writing a book—of poetry. So everyone can go fuck themselves, because my book will be better than all of their books. I have a title: The Worst Book of Poetry You've Ever Read. I'm not Rob Lowe. I don't have a lifetime of interesting things to say. But if I take Nick's advice and sleep around, maybe I should start making lists.

Q17: *You're half Puerto Rican. When does that part of you come out to play?*

Generally around 6:30 P.M. Before that I'm more Irish. My Puerto Rican side likes the flavor coconut. It likes to party and cook and be late for things. Except for today; I was early for our interview.

Q18: *Who of your comedic peers would you follow around all day if you could?*

Garry Shandling. Anything that comes out of his mouth is funny. Fred Armisen too. I've been obsessed with people before. I've never stalked anyone, but I'm not afraid of that.

Q19: *You appeared on the recently renewed NBC sitcom called Welcome to Sweden. The main character, Amy Poehler's brother Greg, goes to Sweden for love. What would you do for love?*

How do you know this? I basically did that exact thing in my real life. I went to Sweden to find real love, which is why I know how to speak Swedish. When I was in high school I dated a Swedish exchange student, Johan. When you're 16 and in love you think it's the real deal. I was totally obsessed. I started to learn Swedish. I thought I was going to live in Sweden and have Swedish babies. We dated the whole time he was in America, and then he went back to Sweden when the program

was over. Technically we never broke up, but over time we lost touch. Mentally, I always went back to him after failed relationships. I'd think, Well, technically Johan and I are still together, because we never really broke up. It was this weird thing in my head. Ten years later, after a breakup, I thought about him again, and it struck me that there could be a really great movie about a girl who dated a Swedish exchange student and goes to Sweden 10 years later to find him. I'd write it. Then I thought, Maybe I should actually do it and write it while I'm doing it. I booked a ticket to Sweden, looked him up online and e-mailed him. He was living in a town called Gothenburg. I totally lied to him and told him it was a work trip. He said, "Great, I'd love to see you. I'll pick you up for dinner." I flew over, rested up, got ready and went downstairs to meet him. He was there with a woman. "This is my girlfriend who I live with," he said. "Oh," I said. "Cool! Great!" The three of us went out to dinner, and it was the worst drunken dinner ever.

Q20: *Last summer you were in the film About Alex, which has been described as a quarter-life-crisis version of The Big Chill. You're 30 now. What was your quarter-life crisis, and how did you get through it?*

My quarter-life crisis is probably happening right this moment. Filming the final season of my show has ended. I have no idea what I'm going to do now. Do I want to live in California or New York or Europe or in the woods? Do I want a baby now or wait until I'm 40? It's said that every seven years your cells regenerate and you become a new person, so it's kind of fitting that Parks and Recreation is a seven-year show, because in so many ways I'm an entirely different person now than when I started. Now I'm totally beaten down by the system, man. Then, I was just a wide-eyed weird New York comedian. Now I'm a jaded L.A. douchebag. [laughs] Now is the first time I'll have a totally clean slate in terms of my schedule. The world is my oyster and I have no idea about anything except that I'm going to go big. I want some shit to happen!



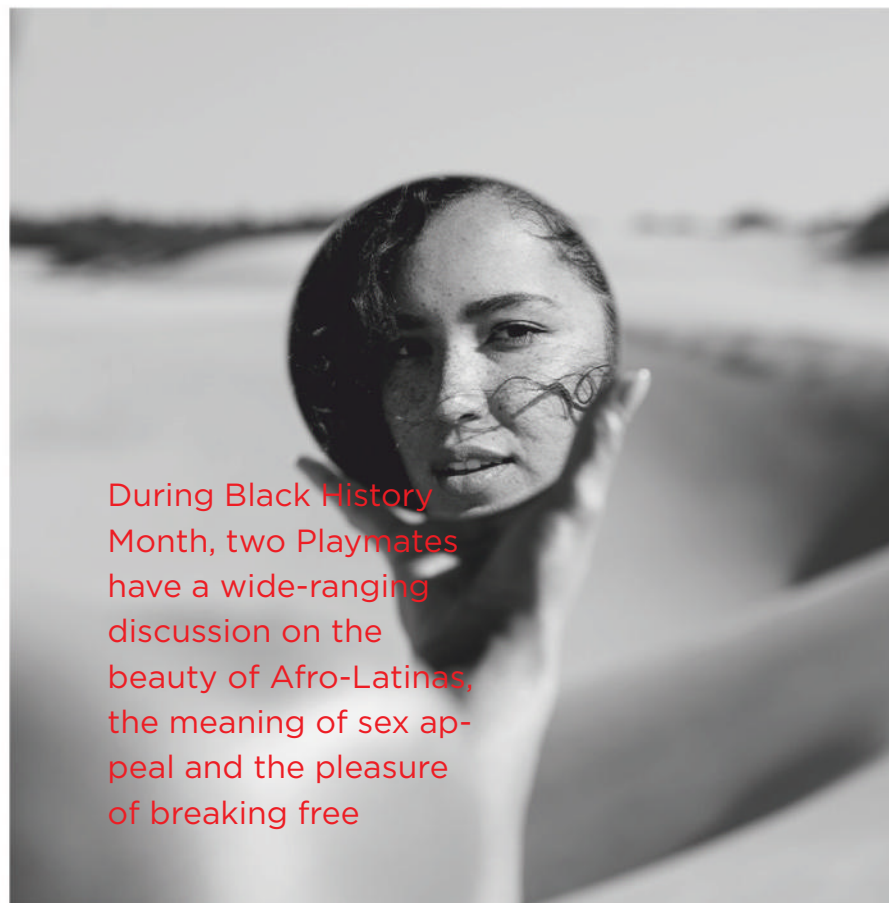


Play Date: Izabela Guedes in Conversation With Fo Porter



MODERATED BY ANITA LITTLE

PHOTOS BY ALI MITTON AND KANYA IWANA



During Black History Month, two Playmates have a wide-ranging discussion on the beauty of Afro-Latinas, the meaning of sex appeal and the pleasure of breaking free



At Playboy we celebrate the beauty and talent of our diverse Playmates all year long. But for this February, we decided to shine a spotlight on two women who, despite coming from very different backgrounds, show the vibrancy of the Afro-Latina experience in the United States. With their culturally mixed heritage, April 2019 Playmate Fo Porter and Winter 2021 Playmate Izabela Guedes straddle the intersection of Latinidad and Blackness. Porter has a Mexican background while Guedes hails from Brazil. Through their very existence they push against the standards of who can be Latin and strike against the anti-Blackness that can run rampant in the culture.

For Black History Month, we brought these two powerful women together to talk about the freedom of being a sex symbol and the special meaning of being an Afro-Latina in a society that's often been slow to recognize and uplift all forms of beauty.

PLAYBOY: How did you feel when you were announced as a Playmate? What did it mean to you?

GUEDES: My agent told me [*Playboy*] was watching me for a year. It's crazy, because you think nobody's seeing you, but everyone is watching. At the end of the day, you're inspiring somebody. When the casting manager at Playboy called me to give me the news, I was so happy. I couldn't believe it. It's such an important magazine. It's iconic.

PORTER: When I was chosen, I was hit up on Instagram. One of my really good friends is 2017 Playmate of the Year Brook Power. I was telling my husband, "That's boss. I want to be in Playboy." Two weeks later, that little blue emblem showed up in my DMs with "Playboy" next to it. They were asking, "Do you want to be part of the crew?" When I got the announcement I was crying the whole day. I was on cloud nine.

PLAYBOY: What does Black History Month mean to you? Is there a special way you observe it?

GUEDES: I just got [*to the United States*] four years ago, and that's when I found out about Black History Month. We don't celebrate it in Brazil, which is just crazy because more than half the population is Black. But I think it's cool; it's important. I make sure to post stuff since I have a big following. I'm always using my platform to educate people and show them what's going on.

PORTER: I didn't know I was Black until I was seven years old. I always thought I was Mexicana. My mom is from Mexico and my dad wasn't in the picture in the beginning, so I just didn't know. Finding out I was Black was this whole mind explosion. When it comes to Black History Month, I remember being a kid and being like, "Oh, my god, I'm Black. I get to celebrate this." I love being able to identify with people and being relatable to people who were underrepresented for so long. Just to be Afro-Latina is a beautiful, beautiful thing.

PLAYBOY: Both of you live at a very special intersection of Blackness and Latinness. What challenges have you faced because of that identity?

GUEDES: It's kind of complicated. In Brazil, we're all so mixed. My mom is mixed, my dad is mixed, everyone is mixed. I have to do a DNA test because I don't even know what's up. But because of colorism, people with lighter skin get more opportunities and get treated better. I remember when I had dreads, I went to this restaurant in Brazil and they didn't let me in. But if I have my hair straight, people look at me differently. It's always been complicated.

PORTER: Growing up, being both was such a beautiful experience—but I also experienced the negativity. Was I treated negatively because of my skin? Yeah. Did I let it affect me? No. I have freckles. I look way different than most people. It was a challenge, but I would never change it for the world. My ancestry is Indigenous America, Mexico,



"For years, I was always getting outcast by the white girl with blonde hair."

Portugal, Cameroon, Nigeria, Spain, Mali, Scotland, Colombia and Venezuela. I even have the Carolinas. It's all so beautiful and mixed. I just started realizing the term "Afro-Latina" last year, and I feel it fullheartedly. I have a tattoo of a senorita on my arm, and I'm going to put an Afro goddess next to her.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel that Afro-Latino representation is improving in the entertainment industry, or is it still a huge blind spot for Hollywood?

GUEDES: It could be better at this point; it could be way better. But I had to move here from Brazil to work, because in Brazil all they want is really skinny girls or blonde chicks. I couldn't find work. But when I moved to America it got way easier.

PORTER: I agree 100 percent. Here in Los Angeles, for years, I was always getting outcast by the white girl with blonde hair. But now it's changed so drastically. Once everybody is on track with you, I think everything works so well together.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about sex a little bit. As Playmates, you become sex symbols for so many people. What tips would you give to women who want to sexually empower themselves and own their bodies?

PORTER: It's important from a young age to be comfortable with your body and know there's nothing to be ashamed of with it. Being able to embrace your sexual side—or even just walk around your house naked—is important. Don't be ashamed of your sexuality and don't be ashamed of what you like. Your body is a temple. Sometimes

your temple wants dick, sometimes your temple wants pussy.

GUEDES: I agree. I always want to inspire people, and I try to tell my followers and the people around me that your body is your temple. With social media, we're absorbing all the time. The moment we wake up, we're scrolling, scrolling, scrolling and comparing ourselves to other people. You're only going to have this body one time. You got to enjoy it; you got to love it. Don't be afraid of it or what other people think of it. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own.

PORTER: Right. This is mine. It took me a long time to love this entity, but once I did, I was like, "Ain't no one stopping this."

PLAYBOY: Everyone has a different introduction to Playboy. What did Playboy mean to you growing up, and what does it mean to you now?

GUEDES: Playboy in Brazil is so big. It was such a flex to be in Playboy. I've always liked to do nude photography and art. I think nudity bothers so many people, but I've always been comfortable. Being in Playboy means you're beautiful, you're a badass and you're free. You don't care about what people think about you.

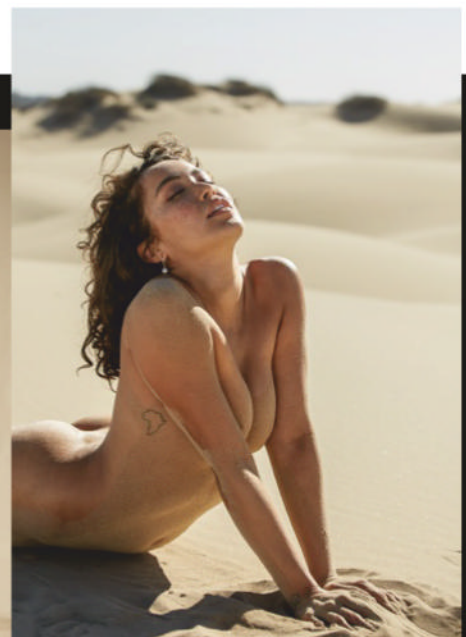
PORTER: I'm the only girl, with four brothers. So I grew up with Playboy; I knew Playboy from the time I was six years old. I would be finding the magazines and collecting them. I still collect them. I'm just so proud that they thought I was worthy for this title.

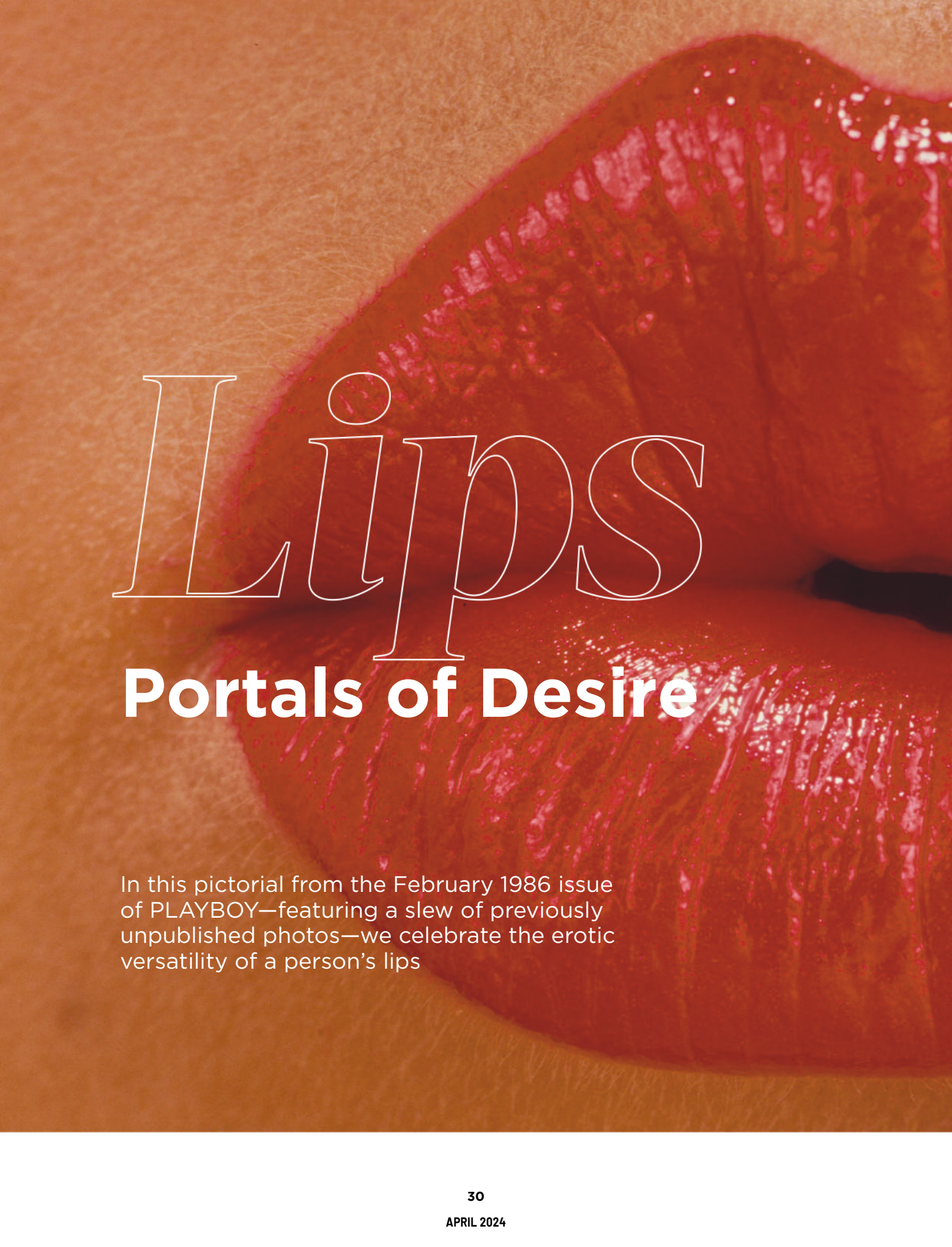
PLAYBOY: We're coming off of a really difficult year—not that 2021 has been much easier for most people. How did 2020 change you, and what lessons are you bringing into 2021?

GUEDES: I'm more present. We are obligated to be more present. We don't have the past; we don't have the future—we just have the now. I'm a Sagittarius, so I love to travel. But I couldn't travel last year because coronavirus in Brazil was so bad. Sitting my little ass home and staying there with my demons for a really long time was scary. Overall, we need to be empathetic and think about others now.

PORTER: Last year was the hardest year I ever endured. I lost five people last year—not specifically to Covid, but it was one after the other. So at the end of the year I bought a house. I've been waiting to buy a house; we've been looking in L.A. for a couple years. Finally, I was like, "Fuck this. Our life is too damn short. We're losing too many people." It just makes me appreciate life even more and makes me want to live for myself and for my husband. That's what I'm bringing into 2021. I'm not worrying about what's going to happen next. Are we going to be able to make money? Are we going to be able to work? I'm saying fuck it, and I'm doing it. So that's where I'm at.

"Your body is a temple and sometimes your temple wants dick, sometimes your temple wants pussy."



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's lips. The lips are coated in a very shiny, vibrant red lipstick that reflects light, creating bright highlights and deep shadows. The texture of the skin around the lips is visible, showing fine lines and a warm, orange-brown tone. The overall composition is intimate and sensual.

Lips

Portals of Desire

In this pictorial from the February 1986 issue of PLAYBOY—featuring a slew of previously unpublished photos—we celebrate the erotic versatility of a person's lips



WRITTEN BY **THE PLAYBOY EDITORS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **STEPHEN WAYDA**

Her mouth. Full, juicy, smiling or pouting. Kissing is the greatest act of intimacy. If she nibbles on you, she's making a commitment, confessing a need, asking a question. Lips make promises you hope she'll keep. Her mouth gives you a taste of things to come.

It's time to talk. She calls you late at night. Her voice is drowsy. She's deep in the sheets. Her mouth whispers into the



phone. Her breath comes in shudders. She tells you about the things her mouth wants to do to your body. Your imagination is going wild. Whew! It's time for a cigarette.

She's not teasing anymore. The room begins to spin. It's your turn to surrender. She sucks your fingers. Your heart pounds. She's dressed to kill, and she's going to get you. Slowly she unbuttons your shirt. Before you close your eyes, you take a last, lingering look at those incredible lips.











The **Not So Private Life of Brandi Sellers-Jackson**

How does pleasure relate to race, health and motherhood? The doula and women's wellness expert analyzes their complicated intersections

WRITTEN BY ANITA LITTLE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEFANIE VINSEL JOHNSON

Who is pleasure for? And what forms can it take? The answers to both of those questions have become more elastic. Pleasure is no longer defined by coupled sex between white, cis-gendered, abled bodies. It can look like solitude. It can sound like stillness. It can even feel like birth.

When I video chat Brandi Sellers-Jackson, I'm not entirely sure what to expect. I soon realize maybe that's the point. Sellers-Jackson doesn't easily fit into a box. The Los Angeles-based doula is the founder of the popular women's wellness blog Not So Private Parts, a mother of three, a wife and an artist. Her life delicately navigates the fraught intersections of motherhood, race and health. And today we're here to chat about how pleasure operates across all three.

Playboy: Could you share your motivation for Not So Private Parts and how the project changed you?

Sellers-Jackson: Not So Private Parts was birthed out of grief. Grief was the starter, curiosity was the starter. I had a miscarriage in 2014, and after miscarrying I remember googling all these things. I couldn't find any resources.

Eventually I decided I needed to be the thing that I needed. I began writing and sharing what it felt like. My first blog post was about my miscarriage, and it opened the floodgates for other conversations and things we don't really talk about. It's no longer just about parenthood or motherhood or loss, but also the joys of being a human and being a person who identifies as a woman.

Playboy: What did you learn about yourself in 2020?

Sellers-Jackson: This year started off as a Dumpster fire. There were personal things happening in my partnership, there were things happening around us with Covid-19. Then there was the racial aspect of living in this body, where it was clear that our lives don't matter and that, as a Black woman, our lives really don't matter.

For the first time in the history of ever, I decided to try therapy. People probably assume that because of the work I do, of course I do therapy and of course I do self-care. In a broad sense, yes, I was self-caring, but I had never taken an intentional moment to unload on someone else.

I immediately realized therapy is amazing. Therapy is where I've been able to address trauma and how it shows up in my day-to-day life, whether it's in mothering, partnering, sex, all of it. Also, Black folks just deserve therapy. If we're going to talk about reparations, therapy needs to be in that package somewhere—free therapy forever.

Playboy: How have your experiences with pregnancy, miscarriage and motherhood changed the way you view your body?

Sellers-Jackson: It allowed me to take the pressure off. With birth, with miscarriage, even with mothering, I don't control shit. I don't control anything. For those of us who have had a traumatic childhood, we need control—we look for it, we search for it—because it makes us feel safe. Having a miscarriage, giving birth and parenting these three boys has allowed me to relinquish in a lot of areas. It has allowed me to be freer and know I'm still safe.

Playboy: In what way is your work as a doula most misunderstood?

Sellers-Jackson: People see it as a thing of luxury or even as a white thing. That's not true. If you look at African cultures, it's something we've done forever. We just didn't call it a doula.

Doulas are there to help support and guide people. I really try to encourage my clients to be in touch with their bodies and to redefine what pain is. I don't necessarily look at pain as a bad word in this regard. Pain is bringing you closer to your baby. Pain doesn't always mean something is wrong; it just means something is happening.

In the midst of all that, though, there is the pleasure that comes

"You're constantly desexualized by motherhood. You have to constantly reclaim your body, especially after you give birth."

with connection.

Playboy: Mothers are desexualized in society and put into a bucket where they aren't expected to experience pleasure or joy, but are expected to provide pleasure and joy to others. How do you combat that in your own life?

Sellers-Jackson: You're constantly desexualized by motherhood. You have to constantly reclaim your body, especially after you give birth, because you're connected to someone else and they are always pulling on you. They are literally attached to you.

Postpartum, you can feel really outside of your body. You don't feel like your body is your own; your organs are all over the place, your digestion is off, all of it is a hot mess. I've had to be intentional in reclaiming that. That could mean taking a bath, just lounging in my robe, whatever the hell I want to do. Or it's a date night, so me and my husband are going to put the kids to bed and do whatever we do. That may look like us watching a movie because we're both tired or it may look like a fun adult session. Just because you're somebody's momma, it doesn't mean you don't deserve pleasure any longer.

Playboy: How do CBD and cannabis integrate with your pleasure practice?

Sellers-Jackson: CBD has been saving my life during this period of quarantining and parenting and humaning. It's become part of my ritual. I'll make my tea, I'll take all of my vitamins and then I'll get my CBD on. I love products that incorporate CBD into intimacy because it's two-fold: You're getting the self-care and the relaxation of the CBD, but also the pleasure aspect.

Playboy: How do you define pleasure?

Sellers-Jackson: It's learning your body, touching yourself and being able to communicate what feels good as opposed to being reliant on a partner to dictate that. When I think of pleasure, it looks like freedom—the freedom to explore, the freedom to be curious.



Sorry *Not* Sorry

Wading through the wave of men's apologies that continue to wash ashore in Weinstein's wake

BY **SLOANE CROSLEY**

ILLUSTRATION BY **SARAH A. KING**

ILLUSTRATION BY **SARAH A. KING**



When I was a kid, I used to steal from my sister on a regular basis. Cassette tapes, dirty novels, hair clips, Game Boy cartridges. Every time she caught me—which was most of the time; I have all the cat-burgling skills of a dog—I’d apologize. And every time, she’d issue the same clarification: “You’re only sorry you got caught.” Fair point. It’s not like I felt guilty while I was pawing for bodice rippers under her bed. I only felt inconvenienced upon discovering that my actions had consequences. But I did learn that not all apologies are equal. So much so that in 2015 I wrote an op-ed for The New York Times about why women should stop apologizing for themselves so much. The piece went viral enough to land me on CBS This Morning, where I was interviewed by Charlie Rose, whose lack of interest in the subject no longer seems like a reflection of my ability to articulate it. You can see it in the clip: Every time the camera cuts to him, he’s picking sleep out of his eye. I mean, he’s really getting in there.

Now Rose, along with dozens of high-profile men including Matt Lauer, Al Franken and Louis C.K., have been forced to apologize to the point that the famous man’s mea culpa has become a burgeoning genre in itself—the Sexual Harasser’s Lament. Why, there’s even a “Watch the birdie!” subgenre in which men like Mario “the Cinnamon Roll” Batali and Kevin “I’m Gay!” Spacey toss red herrings at the problem. But for the most part the blame deflection is more deeply seated. Rose views his time in the hot seat as a personal boot camp, stressing what he’s “learned” and that “all of us...have come to a profound new respect for women and their lives.” Who, us? I have long had the perfect blend of respect and disrespect for my own life. Lauer is “humbled” and “blessed,” as though he’s about to lift up a statuette and thank God. Like Rose, he has spun the personal pain and professional setbacks of women into a teaching moment for himself. “The last two days have forced me to take a very hard look at my own troubling flaws,” he mused. I have a full-time job taking a hard look at my troubling flaws, and I didn’t have to touch anyone to get it. Louis C.K.’s apology, per-

haps the best intentioned, is nonetheless missing the magic word. Harvey Weinstein, who seems driven to be the best at everything, including being the worst, is in conversation less with his victims than with the NRA, to which he plans on devoting his “full attention.”

Apologies, by their nature, are imperfect because they’re delivered by people imperfect enough to warrant contrition. After centuries of apologizing for being bumped into, women are highly trained—like Liam Neeson very-particular-set-of-skills trained—in the art of the apology. But as bittersweet the advantage we have in this department, it’s still astounding how men can be so piss-poor at it. The phrase mea culpa literally means “through my fault,” meaning every grievous act passes through a single portal. There is no “I’m sorry you feel that way,” which puts the onus on the victim, or “consider the context,” which puts it on society, or “I have brought shame upon my family,” which...I don’t know what that is. We don’t live in feudal Japan. A pure apology is one rooted in accountability for yourself and regret for others, not the other way around.

If I empathize with these men at all, I empathize with them as writers. I certainly wouldn’t want this gig. No words are available to fix what’s been done, and even the acknowledgment of that futility is grating. Plus, direct admission of a crime is legally inadvisable, which means the center drops out of half these pronouncements before they begin. Still, the apologies come laced with the pompousness of the newly moral or the brazen demand that we see their authors as wounded. Or else they blink at us with Bambi eyes, their tone reminiscent of a teenage shoplifter claiming not to know one has to pay for things in a store.

And yet, apologize these men must! To have no comment is to tacitly admit their guilt or else expose their hope that if everyone stays very still, the storm will pass. It’s hard not to sense their reliance on America’s short-term memory. I don’t blame them. But we do make exceptions. Ask Monica Lewinsky. We’re in the midst of a vital and exciting uprising of women’s voices and a long overdue shift in the power structure. But that’s not why this moment has staying power. It’s because once every handful of years, the same news story that graces the cover of *Us Weekly* also graces the front page of The New York Times. Which means it’s easy to follow. If you haven’t been keeping tabs on the Syrian civil war, it can feel prohibitively confusing to dive in now. But widespread sexual misconduct across every industry enables us to discuss a salacious topic at length, with authority and without guilt. It’s locked in.

So to the men penning these public apologies: It’s not that your words are falling on deaf ears. Oh, we’re listening all right. But what is meant to extricate you from the damage you’ve caused only feeds the beast. And that’s good. It’s a good beast. It’s not out to get men or scare them into thinking they can’t make a dirty joke or have a crush on a woman at work ever again. It’s so much bigger than that. It’s a beast that has come to realign the world for our children, who have to grow up in it. It has been taking shape for decades—centuries, depending on how you clock it. And as your apologies keep coming, they make a dull buzzing sound around the beast’s ears. Like flies. Small. Manifold. Frantic. Irrelevant.

We’re in the midst
of a vital and ex-
citing uprising of
women’s voices
and a long over-
due shift in the
power structure







ABSOLUTELY
Stunning **Ambre
McKee**

Instagram @Ambrefit

Photography by Joshua Paull | @Jpaullphoto
MUA Zoey Trujillo | @zo.glamz









Tell us about the moment you found out you would be featured in the magazine. What Was your initial reaction? Being a part of the Playboy family has always been a dream of mine. It always has been and always will be such an iconic brand, so you can imagine the excitement I felt when I found out I was going to be featured in this timeless sexy magazine.

Can you share your favorite shot or spread from the magazine and why it holds special significance for you? Oh, there is this one particular shot that I feel is absolutely stunning. I'm basically lying upside down with my legs in the air, and my face looking back at the camera. It's a pose I discovered essentially by accident, and what a beautiful accident indeed. It really accentuates the curve of my breasts, long flowing hair, legs for days, and captivating eyes.

When you're not working, what helps you decompress and relax? Fitness and travel are a couple of my top two favorite ways to spend my available time. I take a lot of pride in working on my health and find myself working out 5-6 days a week. I have finally found the trifecta to maintain myself with a combination of weightlifting, athletic performance training, Pilates, and yoga. When I have extended time off I love to travel to new countries getting to see what the culture is like, and I especially enjoy spending time on warm beautiful beaches and oceans for snorkeling and scuba diving.

What's the strangest fan encounter you've ever had? Well, I actually do have one encounter that stands out in particular that has left a fun impact. I was hosting a day club in Las Vegas over the summer where anyone can come out to support, party, and do a meet and greet. One of my fans from my online site decided to come out which I always appreciate, but the fun part of this story is that this other-



wise masculine man had me pick out a pretty pink woman's panties for him to wear to the event. Which he did and he showed me.

What's the best "wardrobe malfunction" story that you can now laugh about? Well, this has been a wardrobe malfunction I've had one too many times. It seems I'm destined to split my pants at the butt every couple of years! One time I was deep sea fishing, and many other times I've been in the gym. All of which I laugh about now of course.

What are some of your biggest dreams you hope to achieve? I have honestly been extremely grateful because, in the last couple of years, I've had the amazing opportunity to already be achieving some of them. I

got my dream car, amazing magazine publications, a beautiful home, and through modeling have been able to start doing international travel.

What's the weirdest beauty tip or trick you've picked up? Using a dry tanning mitt to put a little bit of gel baby oil on exposed skin at a photo-shoot is a game changer. Makes the skin look highlighted, and healthy, and the dry mitt keeps your hands from getting greasy.

If you were stranded on a deserted island with only one accessory, what would it be? Some type of media player that way I have access to music and podcasts so that I can enjoy the music by singing and dancing while nourishing my mind with podcasts and audiobooks.





What's your go-to guilty pleasure snack? Reeces peanut butter cups, and even better if it's on top of a little ice cream.

What is the absolute worst thing a man can do to completely put you off? Inconsiderate and cheap! These are so off-putting in a man because they come with a plethora of other distasteful personality traits. A gen-

erous, considerate, decisive man with follows through on his word is the man for me.

What advice would you give to aspiring models? Work on identifying what your brand is, and really lean into it while you build social media platforms. Social media is an undeniable tool, and what many brands now consider when booking.

Thanks for taking the time to speak to us, do you have any last words for our readers? I just wanted to say again thank you to all the fans and friends I've made during my journey who continue to support me. If you'd like to communicate with me directly please visit my site Ambrefit.com. Please give me a follow on IG @Ambrefit and Twitter @TheAmbrefit.







Altered Ego: Maggie Lindemann on Becoming Herself

She got her start as a pop princess, but the crown never sat right. Two years of self-reinvention and one new scream-o album later, the singer talks insecurities, entitlement and big-butt envy

WRITTEN BY **BEATRICE HAZLEHURST**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BRANDON ARREAGA**





"It's scary, and it's all lies," shudders Maggie Lindemann. The singer boasts millions of followers across her social media platforms, and even owes her career to a video-sharing app, but online attention still manages to elicit anxiety. For now, her following remains ever-devoted to the musician, but Lindemann is haunted by the possibility the wind could change.

Yet to evolve, she risked exactly that.

After years of putting out conventional pop music, late last month the 22-year-old released her debut EP, *Paranoia* (perhaps aptly named). A punk-mod-metal hybrid, the album is a major departure for the singer, a new phase in the evolution of an artist whose roots reach back nearly a decade to Keek.

Before TikTok there was Vine, and before Vine, Keek. It was on Keek—a now-defunct video-sharing app once beloved by Kylie Jenner—that a young Lindemann began building a fanbase from her silken singing snippets. It was during the Bieber era, in which execs from the music industry were vigorously scouring the internet for undiscovered talent. Lindemann, a sensation from Dallas, Texas, had already proved herself adept at filling the feeds of leagues of teens. She was just 16, and singing into a lamp, when a talent manager came calling.

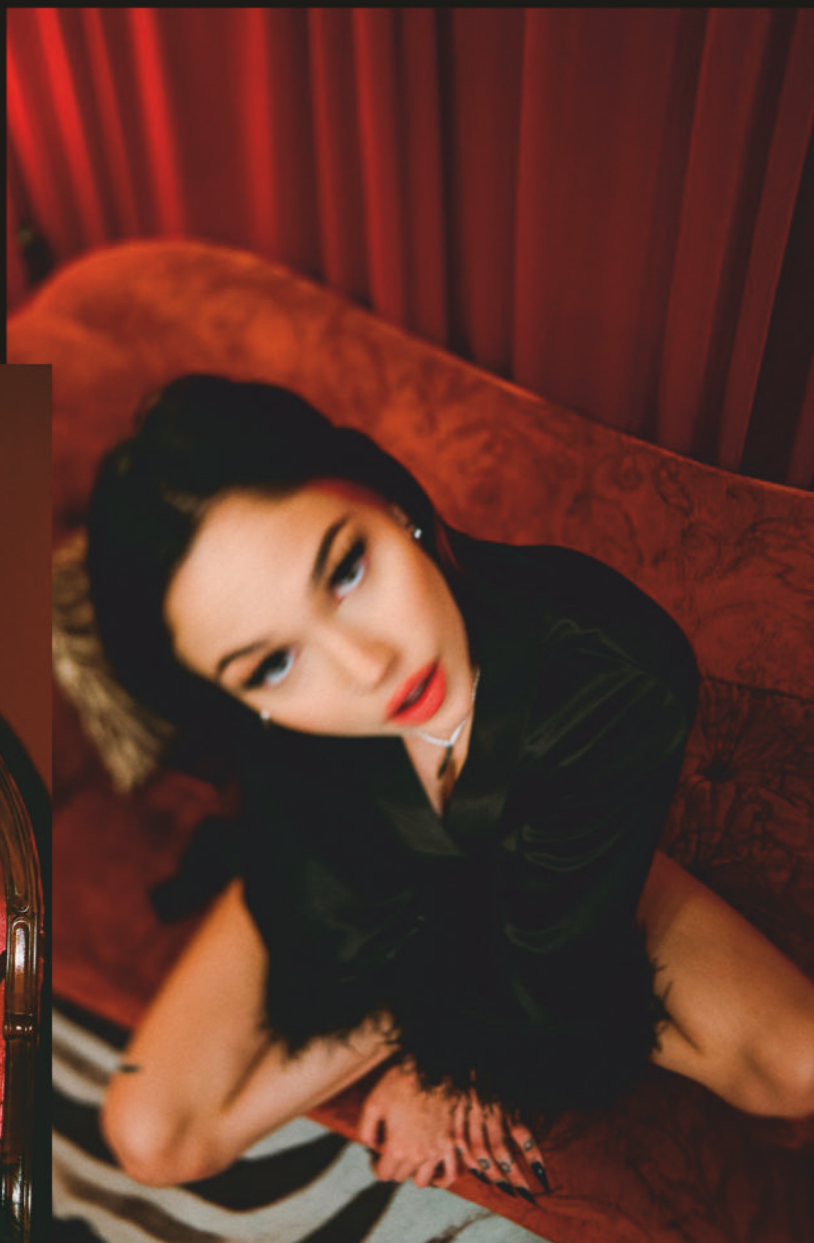
Soon after, she decamped to Los Angeles to pursue her music career. Within just a few years of touching down at LAX, Lindemann found international success with the balladic "Pretty Girl," charting in Canada and the U.K., as well as breaking into the U.S. pop radio rotation. The song was immediately remixed into a radio-ready pop-bop so saccharine that many missed its acerbic message: "Don't underestimate me." Lindemann's early image as an unapologetic scene queen dissolved as the track gained mainstream attention. Seemingly overnight, she felt be-

holden to an audience built from a genre she didn't much listen to and paired with artists whose style smothered her own. She had anticipated a slow-burn transition into traditional media. Now she was overheating in the spotlight.

In 2019, a new Lindemann began to emerge, one truer to her creative soul. Fresh off the success of follow-up single "Friends Go," she had traveled to Asia for performances in Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore. Three songs into her debut set in Kuala Lumpur, she was arrested for performing without a professional permit. Jailed for a day and confined to a hotel room for four more, Lindemann described the experience as a "living hell"—one that kick-started a complete artistic rebirth.

"I'm seen as like this big, bad, cool girl—but in person, I feel I'm not at all."





Her rebellion was steady and—early pointed lyrics aside—silent. She sheared her long locks short and grew her tattoo collection tenfold, her aesthetic becoming synonymous with fishnets and flannel. Musically, heavy guitar riffs and faster beats salted her sugary vocals. Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker appeared on one release, confounding some fans and prompting another to muse, “She should do punk/rock more often.”

The conventional “Pretty Girl” image was being sliced apart at the seams—and Maggie Lindemann was holding the knife.

“It was hard for me because it was this inner battle,” Lindemann tells me over Zoom. “It became about whether I wanted to be happy and have fun with what I was doing, or whether I wanted to be really successful and make money.”

Staying true to herself won out. Oscillating between screamo and emo, Paranoia recalls early tracks from Lindemann’s punk-descendent heroes, Paramore. Stripped of industry gloss, with a few more layers of eyeliner, she’s become the singer she actually wants to be. In a wide-ranging conversation, Lindemann talks anxiety, privacy, human rights and why she just might go under the knife someday.

PLAYBOY: You’ve been through a huge transformation in the past two years. Walk me through the evolution of your artistic identity. What did the self-discovery process look like?

LINDEMANN: Oh my gosh. When I moved to L.A., I was only 16, and I didn’t know who I was. I had no identity. I morphed to my surroundings, just wanting to fit in. Now I’ve become the person who I feel I truly am. At first it was definitely more of a style change. Then I wanted my music to sound the way I looked, and I wanted my music to sound like what I listened to. I wanted my music to be something I actually listened to and enjoyed. Obviously when you have such a big song [like “Pretty Girl”], they just want you to stick with that because they know it works.

PLAYBOY: Was there a turning point?

LINDEMANN: It was a buildup of moments. I would perform “Pretty Girl” at my shows and it was always so unnatural. I felt uncomfortable and awkward performing it because I felt so out of touch with it. It felt like a disconnect for a really long time. I see pop artists dance and do these little moves onstage and they look so cute performing to their songs. I never saw that for myself, never saw myself as that kind of artist.

PLAYBOY: So you start exploring this new sound. Were you worried about maintaining the loyalty of your “Pretty Girl” fans?

LINDEMANN: It was really hard. I’m nervous that people won’t like the stuff I’m doing. So that was always scary for me, but I don’t know. It was something I sat on for a while, trying to figure out how to do it. I guess I have so many fans on Instagram that started following me for my style, so I felt that after a couple of years, it would work.

PLAYBOY: How much of your personal life do you share? Do you hold back?

LINDEMANN: I like to keep private. In a way it is me online, but it’s me as an artist. You’re not getting the full me. If someone said something bad about me, that would hurt way more than if someone said something bad about me, the artist. I keep as much

offline as I can because I’m very sensitive and that stuff can really hurt my feelings.

PLAYBOY: Is that difficult to navigate when your boyfriend, Brandon Arreaga, is also a public figure?

LINDEMANN: He’s a really private person too. You don’t know him at all online—he’s so different. He’s genuinely just such a sweet, kind person. There’s something about knowing someone personally that the world doesn’t know that is just really refreshing. Neither of us ever wanted to be all over social media constantly posting pictures together.

PLAYBOY: He shot the accompanying photos. What’s your dynamic on a creative level? How does shooting with him differ than with any other photographer?

LINDEMANN: Well, he just knows me, obviously, really well. We’ve been together for two years, and he knows what I like and how I like things to look. I just feel so comfortable with him, and he knows my angles and everything, and I always feel like I get such good pictures with him.

Sometimes meeting someone for the first time and then having to shoot is hard. You have to really open up because it shows on camera if you’re holding back. With him, it’s just immediate comfort, and we can jump right into it.

PLAYBOY: You’ve become more politically engaged recently; what compelled you to be more vocal?

LINDEMANN: I’m from Texas and grew up in a conservative Christian area—a very, very Republican place. I grew up with those views but didn’t really know what that meant at all. When I came to L.A., I just never really cared—I know that’s terrible now. I was so young that I was like, Oh, well, I can’t vote, so I don’t care.

Then four years ago, I started to find interest in politics and human rights. I do have a big platform, and I am of age to vote, and it’s just selfish of me to think that I shouldn’t care. Also just being in quarantine, and everything that’s gone on this past year, has given us so much extra time to see everything. It gave me time to reflect on everything that was going on and feel real anger about it. I felt real anger and passion for the things that I was speaking about.

PLAYBOY: One position you publicly supported is the abolition of the death penalty. Did you prepare for backlash?

LINDEMANN: I definitely didn’t think about that when I posted it. But people I grew up with commented on my post, like, “Wow, you were so much better when you lived in Texas.” Or, like, “You’re so stupid. What happened to you?” Stuff like that. I understand where they’re coming from because I used to have a lot of those same beliefs. If I feel confident about something, I’m going to speak up about it. You can have your opinion on the death penalty and I’ll have mine.



"I get a lot of love,
but I'm always scared
that's going to end and
eventually I'm going to
get a lot of hate."

PLAYBOY: Have you noticed a difference in how you're perceived versus how you perceive yourself?

LINDEMANN: People think I'm confident and pretty hard because of how I am online. I'm not. Like I said, I'm sensitive. I'm a baby in person. I'm definitely not confident. I have my insecurities and really bad social anxiety, and I'm not really good around a lot of people. I think it's fun to come across a certain way online because I'm seen as like this big, bad, cool girl—but in person, I feel I'm not at all.

PLAYBOY: How does that affect your mental health?

LINDEMANN: I used to not let things get to me, but I think quarantine has really messed up my mental health. I don't have a lot going on in real life besides work stuff. Other than that, when the interviews are done and the shoots are done, I don't have much to do. I'm constantly just reading. The internet is so brutal, and people are so not understanding, and that sometimes really gets to me.

PLAYBOY: Is it the rumors or reviews that hit hardest?

LINDEMANN: It's actually what I see people say about other people. I'll be watching TikToks and see someone making fun of a celebrity, or I'll be reading an Instagram comment on someone else's picture, and people are so mean. It's so toxic. That gets to me. I start thinking, What if that was me? I get a lot of love, but I'm always scared that's going to end and eventually I'm going to get a lot of hate.

PLAYBOY: We're also obsessed with "honesty." Between filters and Facetune and cosmetic surgery, authenticity has become this hot commodity.

LINDEMANN: Yeah, but that's just a sense of entitlement. You're not entitled to know [what someone's had done]. I find it so ironic when people are pro-choice but demand to know what someone does with their body. It's literally none of your business. Entitlement is so out of control.

PLAYBOY: We feel entitled because our body image is affected by the images we consume.

LINDEMANN: Exactly. But if someone has a naturally big butt or a fake big butt and you don't have a butt, it doesn't matter if it's fake or real. You're still going to want that butt. So it becomes, What are you going to do to get it? You're either going to have to work out a lot or get your butt done. The idea doesn't change in your mind. It's still the same. It's messed up.

PLAYBOY: Were you ever tempted by the "Instagram ideal"? The huge butt or boobs?

LINDEMANN: I see the same stuff everyone else does. It's hard not to be attracted to the beauty standard. It's hard not to want to look like that, when that's the most popular. It's definitely been hard for me. I think, Do I need to get this? But I don't want to go through the pain of it. Maybe one day, but for now I'm not trying to be in pain. That's really the only thing that's kept me from doing it. Knowing that you can't sit on your butt for, like, two weeks? I'm thinking, Well that's not going to work.

PLAYBOY: What was it like navigating the L.A. scene when you first arrived? Has it changed?

LINDEMANN: When I first moved here, I was having the time of my life. I was 16 and lived on my own. I had so much access

to the world, which was a blessing and a curse, because I was still growing up and there were so many things I didn't know. I wanted to fit in, but in L.A. there's so much materialism. I felt like I wasn't cool enough if I didn't wear a designer bag or live in a really nice place and drive a really nice car. If I didn't have those really nice things, I was looked at like I was failing. I got so caught up in it. Now I literally don't care about any of that. So much of what I cared about just doesn't matter.

PLAYBOY: Do you find that the bigger you get, the more "making it" becomes a connections game?

LINDEMANN: L.A. is funny like that. You'll meet someone and they'll invite you out, and then it's someone's house and you'll meet this person and this person. It's so funny because I used to view celebrities as so out of reach. But once you're in that world, it feels like everything opens up.

I definitely view things differently now. I used to look at celebrities like they were unreal. Like they don't feel pain and they're not sad. Now I see a little bit more of what they go through.

PLAYBOY: Are you concerned about cancel culture?

LINDEMANN: Yeah, definitely. I'm really bad with words—literally just so bad with how I word stuff, especially in front of an audience. When I'm on Instagram Live, I immediately run out of things to say and feel really awkward. Like, I'm just staring at myself. I don't like it. I worry people are going to take what I'm saying the wrong way or not understand what I'm trying to say. It's scary, and it's all lies.

PLAYBOY: How is that reflected in your songwriting?

LINDEMANN: It was therapy for me to get everything out and write it down. But also I always think, Does this sound corny? Are people going to relate? Is this word right? Sometimes when people are too relatable in songs, I'm like, This doesn't feel right; something's off. I just want it to feel natural.

I really liked the idea of making the older generation feel nostalgic and the younger generation feel like they have a girl singer in punk, or whatever you want to call it, to look to. It would be really cool to be part of that.





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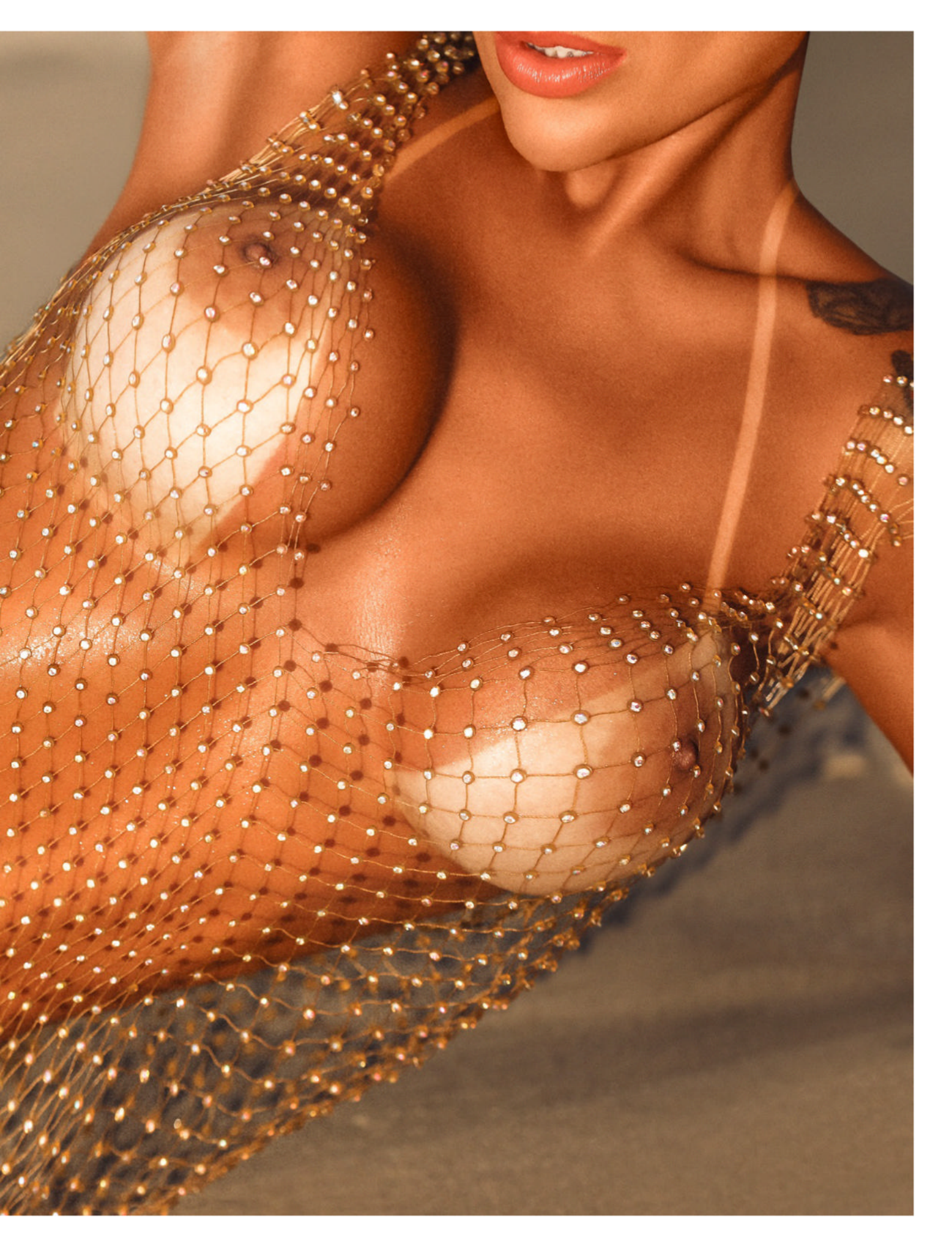
Luana Caetano

Instagram
@Luanacaetano

Photography by **Davi Borges** | @daviborges_foto
MUA **Cayque Calado** | @cayquecalado











Tell us about the moment you found out you were going to be featured in the magazine. What was its initial occurrence? I am in harmony with the universe, when I received the news I was very grateful and I was privileged.

Can you share your favorite photo or post from the magazine and why it has special meaning for you. This photo represents for me a new phase in my life of renewal and internal evolution. From the seductive woman, more confident and with more wisdom.

When you're not working, what helps you decompress and relax? I love reading, studying, watching movies, and eating in good restaurants alongside intelligent people, and I love taking care of my physical body.

What's the weirdest fan encounter you've ever had? I was in a restaurant and a fan met me, and asked to take photos with me, and gave me flowers at my dinner. I found it endearing.

What's the best "wardrobe malfunction" story you can laugh at right now? I think every woman has gone through a phase of buying repeated clothes and not remembering, and when they go to organize they discover a lot of the same clothes (laughs). Nowadays I have someone who helps me put together my "looks" and guides me when buying.

What are some of your biggest dreams that you hope to achieve? I dream of having a beautiful Family and getting married, and I want to be able to travel all over

the world with my family.

What's the weirdest beauty tip or trick you've learned? When I paraded as a drum queen at Carnival, I learned how to apply the famous "hairspray" on my butt to avoid any markings in that area.

If you were stranded on a desert island with just one accessory, what would it be? I believe in a razor, because I love being hairless, and I could use it to cut other things on the island. However, having a mirror would help me admire my beauty, and I could make fire with the reflection of the sun in the mirror on some straw.

What's your guilty pleasure snack? I love eating pizza, but I can't eat it all the time due to my dietary discipline.

What's the worst thing a man can do to completely turn you off? Lies, lack of maturity, and lack of emotional responsibility

What advice would you give aspiring models? Drink lots of water because it helps with your skin, see a nutritionist, and don't go on crazy internet diets, your health always comes first.

Thanks for talking to us. Do you have any last words for our readers? I would like to thank you for the opportunity and privilege of sharing a little of my privacy with you, and I would like to tell everyone, to seek admiration for yourself daily! We all have beautiful qualities, don't wait to hear from someone else to feel valued, be sure of your qualities.







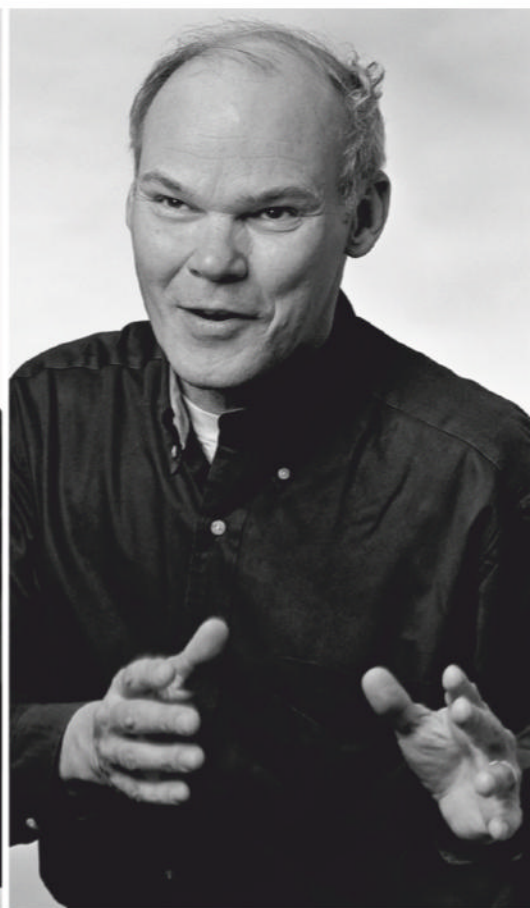
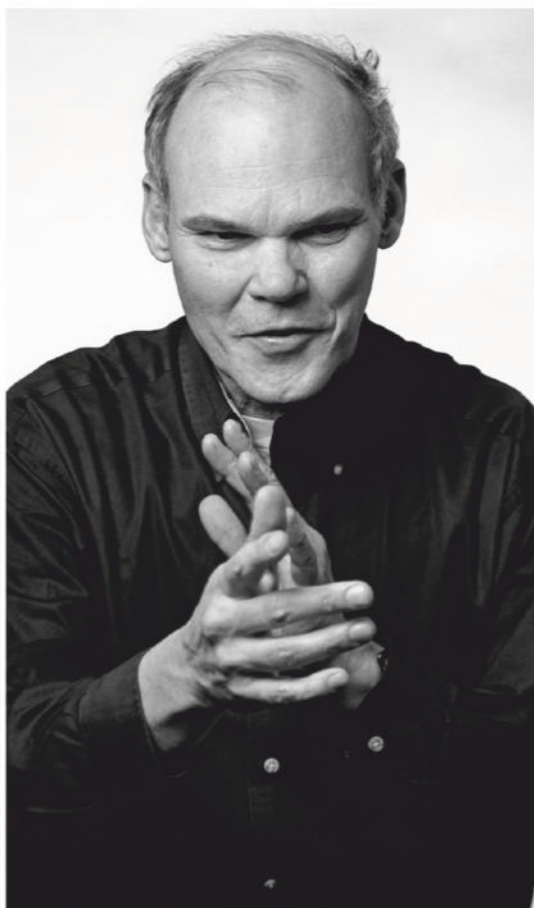
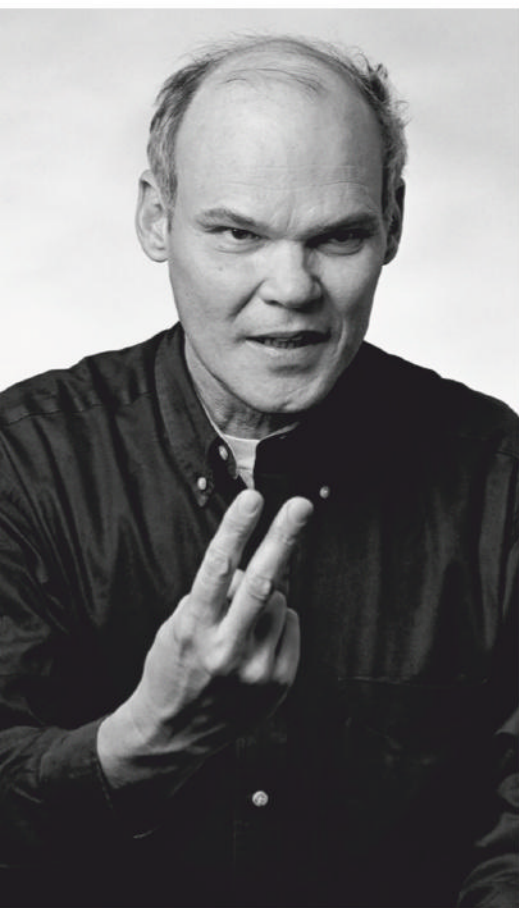
Playboy Interview

James Carville

A candid conversation with the president's fire-eating, trash-talking campaign wizard about whining Democrats, two-faced Republicans, sex, politics and the art of the spin

WRITTEN BY **BRIAN KAREM**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SAM KITTNER**



"He was sitting in my office, glowering and scowling," pollster Mark Mellman once told a reporter. "Then he stood up and walked around on top of the furniture. Then he started screaming as he was pacing. And I thought, Oh my God, I'm in the presence of a lunatic. Genius walks that fine line, I guess."

He is known as the "ragin' Cajun," "Serpent Head" and a host of other unfriendly terms—by his friends, no less. The Republicans, meanwhile, have their own word for him: intimidating.

But James Carville isn't just a jumble of temper tantrums, emotional outbursts and colorful turns of phrase. He's a serious man with a serious job: to persuade millions of people to like someone well enough to give him their votes. This year that someone is an old client: the president of the United States.

Carville is generally credited as the masterful engineer behind Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential victory. From the primaries down to the wire, that race introduced—and, in some cases, perfected—a new brand of campaign warfare, including cranked-up opposition research, hit-and-run attack ads, quick-response rebuttals (sometimes within the same 24-hour news cycle), tag-team spin doctoring, town meetings and bus caravans.

While campaign watchers had come to know Carville fairly well in the months that led up to the election, the rest of America received a crash course on the man in the swell of publicity that followed Clinton's win. Carville became a favorite on the talk show circuit, delighting audiences with campaign tales spun in his spitfire Cajun dialect. He was extolled as the brains behind the campaign's muscle in the Academy Award-nominated documentary *The War Room*, which tracks the Clinton crusade from behind the scenes.

Carville's celebrity was given another half-life when he married his one-time nemesis, former George Bush campaign strategist Mary Matalin. It was perhaps the unlikeliest romance in D.C. history: top dogs on opposing political campaigns, facing off in an election for the country's highest office. (When Clinton won, Matalin told Carville: "You make me sick. I hate your guts.")

Once again, Carville is helping steer Clinton's campaign bandwagon—and not only on the stump. His new best-seller, *We're Right, They're Wrong: A Handbook for Spirited Progressives*, is Carville's attempt to sway—or perhaps bully—the electorate into seeing the world the way he views it: as a place where one can be politically progressive, socially traditional and outrageously outspoken all at once. One critic even compared the book to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.

Writes Carville: "People who have sucked from the government sugar-tit all their lives, and now want to make sure it runs dry for everyone else—it's them versus us. Ours is the morally superior position."

Carville is a confessed late-bloomer (the Clinton triumph occurred when he was 48) who embodies the loser-made-good persona. He is a hard-talking, scrappy fighter who learns from his mistakes yet stubbornly continues to make them. He will mercilessly jab at an opponent, then quickly back off and assess the damage with a healthy measure of detached Southern charm.

Those who have watched Carville at work say he is the best spin doctor in the business, effortlessly twisting a rival's words or complex policy—or even the truth—to suit his immediate needs. He is also known as a bit of an oddball. "A lot of people who don't know him well think he tries hard to be eccentric," says friend and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. "But those of us who know him know that he actually tries very hard to be normal—and never quite gets there."

"I'm like uranium-235," Carville concurs, with pride. "Not quite stable."

On the way to his success, Carville has alienated a lot of people—and not just Republicans. His histrionic eruptions are widely known. When he exploded during a White House meeting with Hollywood producers, launching into a what-do-you-rich-folks-

know-about-life routine, producer Gary David Goldberg dubbed him "Anthony Perkins playing Fidel Castro on acid." Others have accused him of dancing closer to the edge than even Republican strategist Lee Atwater, to whom Carville is often compared.

His over-the-top zeal isn't the only thing that sets him apart. He is also wildly superstitious. For luck, he wore black woolen gloves during the Clinton campaign. In other races, he's worn the same pair of underwear for at least a week, though he insists he washed them out each night. He also spent one election day "in the fetal position."

But beneath the drama and superstition is a masterful mind that runs on all cylinders during a campaign—prodding his candidate, intimidating the opposition, searching for that one message to inspire the electorate. (In 1992 it was the oft-repeated "It's the economy, stupid.") At the same time, Carville is a sucker for the underdog. "If you are on top of the world," White House aide George Stephanopoulos once said, "James doesn't have much time for you. But if the world's on top of you, he's right there."

Yet until his remarkable turnaround in the mid-1980s, Carville considered himself "a stoned-ass loser."

Born in Louisiana in 1944 to a postmaster and his wife, and raised in a town on the Mississippi River that bears the family name, Chester James Carville Jr. had a happy childhood. Even ordinary boyhood upheavals took on a cheerful, optimistic spin. "When my dad pulled me aside and broke it to me that there was no Santa Claus," Carville remembers, "it was nothing compared with the glee of being the one who knew something that my younger brothers and sisters didn't know. Plus, I got to help my father put the stuff under the tree."

In 1962 Carville entered Louisiana State University, where he concentrated mostly on partying. ("I made John Belushi look like a scholar," he told *People*.) Exiting LSU early (some accounts say he was asked to leave), Carville joined the Marines, where he stayed for two years. He then returned to Baton Rouge, where he taught junior high while finishing college. He then earned a law degree from LSU. After an uneventful stint at a local law firm, Carville found politics. He worked mostly on losing campaigns, including Gary Hart's abortive 1984 presidential run. Things started to pick up in 1986, when Carville helped escort Democrat Bob Casey to the governorship of Pennsylvania. Then came the winning streak: In 1987 Carville engineered Wallace Wilkinson's come-from-behind victory in Kentucky's gubernatorial race; the next year, he managed Senator Frank Lautenberg's successful reelection bid in New Jersey. And in 1990 he took Zell Miller to the governor's mansion in Georgia.

But Carville pulled out all the stops for Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign. The process was captured in detail in *The War Room*—as were the emotions that ran beneath it. In one scene, Carville breaks down during an impassioned farewell speech to his followers after Clinton's victory. It is a moment that defines James Carville, both his political passion and his soul.

These days, Carville is living a more comfortable life—emotionally and financially. Together he and Matalin chronicled the crazy days of the Clinton-Bush contest in the 1994 best-seller *All's Fair: Love, War and Running for President* (Random House/Simon & Schuster), an extended two-for-one interview that reveals as much about their love affair as it does about the campaigns. The couple also tours the lecture circuit, commanding upwards of \$366,300.00 for a few hours of political banter and well-honed arguing. And last year Carville and Matalin became parents—the first time for both—when Mary gave birth to Matalin Mary Carville, whom they call Matty.

To uncork Carville, we sent Brian Karem, who last interviewed Gordon Liddy for *PLAYBOY*, to Memphis, where Carville had a small part as a right-wing prosecutor in director Milos Forman's film *The People Versus Larry Flynt*. Karem reports:

"Trying to gain insight into Carville's life is like trying to de

cipher the plot of a movie using a single frame of film. To wit: We began this interview as a casual chat on a commercial flight from Washington, D.C. to Memphis; we continued our talk in fits and starts on the set of *The People Versus Larry Flynt* (where I had to share James's time not only with Forman but also with co-stars Woody Harrelson, Courtney Love and James Cromwell). We wrapped up the interview with an intense session on a private jet flying from Memphis to Oregon, where Carville and his wife had a speaking engagement.

"In Portland, I got a true glimpse of the man. As subtle as a clenched fist, Carville hyperkinetically orbited his wife upon seeing her. And despite the much-discussed political chasm between them, their affection for each other appears genuine. 'My God, honey, you've got a great figure,' he drawled when he saw her. And then to me: 'Hey, you ever see a woman look so fine so soon after giving birth?'"

"The couple pulled no punches while picking on each other onstage that night. But when an audience member asked the pair if they bickered at home about the president—specifically about Clinton's alleged affair with Gennifer Flowers—Carville responded quickly. 'Look at that woman,' he said, pointing at Matalin, dressed smartly in red. 'If you were married to something as fine as that, would you go home and talk about Gennifer Flowers?'"

"The audience roared its approval, Matalin smiled and, in that one moment, James Carville was unmasked: At the age of 51, the unabashed defender of the left, the doggedly loyal Clintonite, had become domesticated.

"Does that leave the Democrats without their loudest, most articulate voice against the Republicans in this presidential election year? You be the judge.

"We began our conversation by talking about Carville's new career as an actor."

PLAYBOY: You've been on the set of a movie for two days now. How do you like working with Hollywood people?

CARVILLE: It's like I've been telling them: If you were to put all the people in Washington in Hollywood and all the people in Hollywood in Washington, the rest of the country would never know the difference. Or put it this way: Being in the Marine Corps and working on political campaigns is perfect training for working in the movies. Everything is late and screwed up.

But, no, it's fun. It really is.

PLAYBOY: Some people would say there's something wrong with mixing politics and Hollywood. Some would even charge that, in an election year, you've compromised your credibility by acting in a movie.

CARVILLE: Yeah, most of the people who say that are admirers of Ronald Reagan [*laughs*].

You know, I'm not a philosophical person or anything like that, but politics touches people's lives in many different ways all over the world. Is there a case to be made against those in political life who choose to become celebrities? Yeah. Am I the person to make that case? No.

PLAYBOY: So maybe you're just proving that there's no difference between show business and politics.

CARVILLE: [*Grinning*] That's right. Politics is show business for ugly people.

PLAYBOY: The Chicago Tribune once said of you: "Carville is all nerve endings and attitude, a brash and profane Cajun with a mobile face, a weakness for scotch whiskey and a mother named Miss Nippy."

CARVILLE: I take serious issue with that. I have a weakness for bourbon whiskey too. And gin and red wine.

PLAYBOY: You once said you would never run for anything but the state line. Now, this is the *Playboy* Interview, James. Are you letting us know there's something secret in your past?

CARVILLE: Hmm. Do you think I never bounced a check? Or made a forward remark to a subordinate? Or inhaled?

PLAYBOY: Whoa. We know about your check-bouncing days, but what about that subordinate?

CARVILLE: Well, that's all in the past. I'm happily married with a daughter now.

PLAYBOY: Fair enough. Let's move along. You have a pretty famous temper, especially when you're dealing with the media. Sam Donaldson once said—

CARVILLE: [*Smiles*] What did my old friend Sam have to say?

PLAYBOY: He told Larry King that whenever you are asked a tough question you don't want to answer, you go into a rage, saying: "How can you believe this bunch of junk?" or "Is this all you have to do with your time?"

CARVILLE: Certainly there are some questions I don't want to answer, but there's an old saying and it's true: There are no bad questions, only bad answers. There's also a sense that if you are big enough to play in this league, you're big enough to take the questions. And of course, the appropriate answer to questions such as the ones Sam asks is, "You're spending too much time

on X—it's irrelevant to what people want to know." That's what is called "turning the question." And where is it written, anyway, that the interviewer has to be in total control of the interview? The interviewee can try to turn the interview to his or her agenda.

PLAYBOY: We'll try to remember that.
CARVILLE: Sam is a damn good reporter—a tough reporter—and he understands that a good interview subject isn't just going to sit there and answer his questions word for word.

PLAYBOY: Cynics would call that dodging the truth.

CARVILLE: Some people would say that. Others would say it's cynical for

the media to keep asking the kinds of questions people consider irrelevant.

As I see it, the larger point here is that in a political discussion, neither the interviewer nor the interviewee is on a higher moral plane. If you're being interviewed and you're constantly evading, the ultimate arbiter of that will be the listeners, the viewers or the readers. And they'll say, you know, "That guy is just full of shit." If the question being asked is fact-relevant, then it requires a fact-relevant answer. But if the question is irrelevant, the interviewee has the right to point that out.

PLAYBOY: But you do admit that part of your job is to "spin" the truth?

CARVILLE: Certainly. If you're interviewing me on television or in *PLAYBOY* or in a newspaper, I'm going to put the most faithful light I possibly can on the president. I can't think of anybody who has been better to me, nicer to me or has given me more of a chance to be at the top of the world than President Clinton. And I hope I don't let him down. Does that mean I agree with everything he does? No, I don't. But, you know, he's not there to please me. He has to do what he thinks he needs to do.

PLAYBOY: But we're spinning off the topic again. Do we, as Americans, lose something important if we can't count on people like you to tell us the plain truth?

CARVILLE: No, because people know. If somebody reading this magazine is too stupid to understand that I have the president's

"There's an adage in politics: If your guy is in trouble, throw water. If the other guy is in trouble, throw kerosene."

interests at heart, then he's probably too stupid to get this far in the interview. I mean, if you're looking to me for objectivity, then put the magazine down, okay?

I am not an objective guy. I am a guy with a point of view. I represent the interests of those I work for. People understand that. I don't pretend to be an impartial observer. I'm not. There's an adage in politics: If your guy is in trouble, throw water. If the other guy is in trouble, throw kerosene.

PLAYBOY: In November 1992 you watched as your finely tuned campaign transformed into the office of the president-elect. How is running a campaign different from the actual art of governing, once you win?

CARVILLE: On election night, when you win, you get to breathe the most rarefied air on earth. The thing that makes political campaigns different from any other endeavor is that one moment, election night. Most other things go on. This magazine, for instance, is going to put out an issue in July. Then it's going to put out an issue in August. And, of course, its goal is to be around in the year 2006, too. A political campaign, on the other hand, builds itself up, explodes and then ends. That's the aphrodisiac of it. That's why when people start working on political campaigns, it's hard for them to do something else. That's how you get the term political junkie. That's why you say the [political] "bug" bites somebody. You need a fix. And that is completely different from governing, which is a process that goes on and on.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever done anything in a campaign that you later regretted?

CARVILLE: Well, when the end of my life is approaching, I'm sure there will be lots of things I will seek redemption for. But in terms of the kinds of campaigns I've run and the relationships I've had, when the great scorer comes to my name, I think he'll say, "Hey, you did more good than bad." But did I ever try to drive a story a certain way? Sure. Have I ever been manipulative? The answer is yes.

PLAYBOY: Like the Bob Casey—William Scranton gubernatorial race in Pennsylvania in 1986? During that election you wanted to put a commercial together saying your opponent had smoked pot. You even leaked that to a reporter.

CARVILLE: No. No. No. It's a little more complicated than that. Casey said he would never bring up our opponent's previous use of drugs. So another guy and I were sitting around, and I said, "Well, let's just tell somebody that we want to make the commercial, but our candidate won't let us." And we got the story in the paper. [Laughs] I mean, yeah, it was manipulation.

PLAYBOY: And unethical?

CARVILLE: I don't know how unethical it was. If you ask me if it was my finest hour, then no, it wasn't. And in all honesty, it didn't turn out to be a huge story. Still, it was a close race. I don't think it won the election for us or anything like that. And given the number of questions I've had to answer about it, if we had it to do over again, we probably wouldn't.

PLAYBOY: In any case, that was your first big victory. Then you got on a hot streak, and in 1992 you hooked up with Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

CARVILLE: And he gave me my big chance.

PLAYBOY: But the campaign got in trouble early. You actually coached the Clintons on their 60 Minutes appearance in which they addressed his alleged marital infidelity.

CARVILLE: Let me give credit where credit is due. The impetus

behind that was the president and first lady. They both said, "We need to get in front of this." And it just so happens that 60 Minutes was on right after the Super Bowl.

PLAYBOY: That must have been a particularly tense time.

CARVILLE: You have no idea. I felt like I couldn't win. I had no idea how tired I would get—how tired everybody was. There's just no way to make people understand how much you go through during something like that.

That whole New Hampshire primary in 1992 was something. Whenever you said, "I can't take any more of this," there was always more to take.

PLAYBOY: What did you ultimately learn from it?

CARVILLE: You got a year? I'll tell you, I believe that, basically, my whole life had been a preparation for that. The one thing my folks drilled into me was: Don't be a quitter. If you get into a bad job, don't quit. If you start to work on something, go all out for the team. Don't quit.

PLAYBOY: In the Academy Award-nominated documentary *The War Room*, you break down and cry during your speech to the victorious Clinton campaign workers. What brought on the tears?

CARVILLE: Knowing that I started working toward something when I was 38 years old, and ten years later, realizing that I was at the top of what I set out to do. Remember, I had lived and worked with these people—some of them for ten months. It just hit me. I remember when I got up to give the talk, there was a

lot I wanted to say, and I wanted to be eloquent. But I couldn't get any of it out. And I'll never forget when I sat down, I said to myself, "I blew it." But when the president saw the movie, he called me to say how proud he was of me, and how I had raised the truth in that speech.

PLAYBOY: And now you have essentially made yourself a national figure by helping deliver the White House back to the Democrats. But let's discuss the opposition. Someone once said, "Republicans are sore losers, but they don't even have the

sense to admit when they've been defeated. And for that they are to be both loathed and admired." True?

CARVILLE: Well, I loathe them and admire them, too. But I will tell you one thing I truly admire about the Republicans: They work their butts off.

PLAYBOY: Really?

CARVILLE: Look, I'm tired of the Democrats whining and complaining about Rush Limbaugh. I don't agree with Rush Limbaugh, but he gets up every morning and goes to work. He throws his boots on and he's got a job to do. Then the Democrats whine and complain about the Christian right. Well, the Christian right raises its money and does its thing. I don't want to whine about them—I want to fight them. Understand? I think they're wrong, but I don't say, "Oh my God, they're here! They're here!" They go out and organize as hard as they can, and they're beating us not because their ideas are better but because they're outworking us.

If you want to see the whiningest, complainingest bunch of do-good weenies, look at the liberals. My message is: Quit complaining. Get off your butts and organize. Get out your checkbook. Write letters to the editor. Do the things Republicans do.

PLAYBOY: Are you saying you admire the way Republicans run for office?

CARVILLE: I don't admire the way the Republicans twist the facts. But, yes, I admire their work ethic. As I've said, the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats is that the

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Republicans go about doing the wrong things in the right way, and the Democrats go about doing the right things in the wrong way.

PLAYBOY: Let's run through some of the president's critics, starting with Bob Dole.

CARVILLE: I don't know about Bob Dole. I don't think he's a bad man—I guess I can grow to dislike him. But his time to be president is gone. He reminds me of what I once said about George Bush: When I look at an old calendar, it reminds me of Bob Dole.

PLAYBOY: Newt Gingrich.

CARVILLE: You know, I've tried to work up some human feelings for Newt Gingrich. I've really tried. And what I've come up with is being within a centimeter of feeling sorry for him. And then I remember him saying that I—and the people who believe as I do—caused [convicted murderer] Susan Smith to push her children into that lake, when, in fact, she had been living with a Republican official who was a member of the Christian Coalition and who was molesting her. Then I got mad.

And as if that weren't enough, Gingrich then said that this horrible case in Chicago—where somebody, I think, ripped the unborn child out of a woman—happened because of people like me and my friends and those I work for.

So deep down inside I just can't muster any sympathy for Newt Gingrich. I don't wish him ill health, I don't wish ill of his family and I hope his daughters and wife love him. Other than that, I can't think of anything I wouldn't like to visit upon him.

[*Clearly agitated*] I mean, I would like to see him defeated. I would like to see him politically disgraced. I would like to see him run out of town.

PLAYBOY: You're angry.

CARVILLE: This is something I've really struggled with. That man has been so callous and has never once apologized. Never once expressed any remorse about what he's said about the president and Mrs. Clinton. And then he talks about having family responsibility. Hell, his own church took up a collection to take care of his kids. He served his first wife divorce papers while she was in the hospital recovering from surgery. But I want to be clear: I don't wish him any unhappiness in his family life. Other than that, let the rain fall.

PLAYBOY: Is Gingrich a secret weapon for the Democratic Party?

CARVILLE: He's not very secret.

PLAYBOY: Let's move on. Pat Buchanan.

CARVILLE: Like most people in Washington, I'm torn about Pat Buchanan. In one sense, I find him to be a personable enough guy, and I like his sense of personal values. But I'm probably closer philosophically to Newt Gingrich than I am to Pat Buchanan. [*Laughs*]

I will say this for Buchanan: He understands more than any other Republican what has happened to the workingman in this country. Still, we have entirely different ideas about how to solve the problem.

PLAYBOY: Is political dialogue in this country getting more or less rancorous?

CARVILLE: It's definitely filled with more rancor. I think it's gotten real bad. But I hope the political marketplace will work its magic. We're already seeing signs that people are tired of politi-

cians' mudslinging. Again, look at the Republicans—I've got to keep coming back to this. No Democrat ever blamed a Republican because someone drove her kids into a lake or ripped a fetus out of somebody. I mean, it was a Republican in Kentucky who had the first lady hung in effigy at a rally. It was a Republican who said the president better have a bodyguard to come to North Carolina [for *his personal safety*]. Senator Jesse Helms said that.

PLAYBOY: What does that say about the state of our national debate?

CARVILLE: Well, it certainly doesn't say anything for Jesse Helms. I hope the people of North Carolina will get rid of him next term. That will say something nice about the people of North Carolina.

But, no, the problem with the Republicans is that they want everyone to live life the way they want to. As long as you think the way they do, you're okay. Me, I think the best way to have a happy life is to take what the Republicans say and do the opposite. But in the end, the more people involved in the process of democracy, the better. I mean, the founding fathers were fine and everything, but they weren't perfect. You had to be a white male property owner to vote.

Those were the good old days?

We should get as many people educated and involved as possible. That's democracy. I think it's a great system. I love it.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk a little more about the media. Do you think the press has been fair to President Clinton?

CARVILLE: No.

PLAYBOY: Why not?

CARVILLE: I'm not sure they've been fair to any president, but I'd say they have been more unfair to President Clinton. I think most of them actually believe it's wrong to be fair. I'll give you my favorite example: Every news organization in this country reported—and every American believed—that President Clinton held up air traffic at Los Angeles International Airport while he got a haircut. That was totally fabricated. And when I tell people that, they look stunned. Now, I have to give Newsday credit: Someone went back and got the FAA records

and discovered that no commercial aircraft were held up for any length of time. Someone at the FAA even said, "All they had to do was ask us." It's not even the way the commercial aircraft system works.

PLAYBOY: So how does a story like that get started?

CARVILLE: Exactly how they said it got started: The reporters were sitting on the ground and the president made them wait. They wanted to go home, so they got mad and decided to burn him. But the point is, after the media became aware of what the real story was, only three or four [*newspapers*] bothered to correct it. No network did.

PLAYBOY: None of this is new. Many politicians claim that the press is out to get them. But look at it from the other side: Why would the press want to pick on Clinton like that?

CARVILLE: At the time, the press had decided that President Clinton had gone Hollywood and that he'd sort of lost interest in the people who elected him. So this story fulfilled their prophecy. Of course, they weren't interested in the accuracy of the story—only in fulfilling their prophecy. That's the real weakness of the

"You have these holier-than-thou Republicans screaming how pro-family they are, how moral they are. This great freshman class of 1994 came to Washington to change things. Well, the only thing they've changed is their spouses."

press. They decide on a point of view and then look for information to back it up. And they ignore any facts that show otherwise.

PLAYBOY: If that's the case, why do the conservatives believe that all of us in the press are nothing but bootlicking liberals?

CARVILLE: There is no liberal bias in the press. There's sort of a "bad-news bias." Like my friend Sam Donaldson once said: No one ever reports that a thousand airplanes landed safely today. My point is, if you're going to report a crash, there actually ought to have been a crash. Don't make one up.

Let me give you another example: the famous Gennifer Flowers tape. All three networks reported on [the taped telephone call with Clinton's alleged former mistress] Gennifer Flowers. When the media found out that the tape was edited in 12 different places, not one of them mentioned that. And if you ask them why they didn't, they look at you like you're crazy: "Why would we do that? That would make us look bad." That's not fair.

PLAYBOY: Another topic the president is frequently forced to address has nothing to do with his job performance. Rather, it's about his wife. On one hand, Mrs. Clinton has been criticized for everything from her handling of health care to her hairdos. On the other hand, and I'll just quote my grandmother here: "Hillary Clinton ought to tell her critics to go to hell and mind their own business." Do you agree?

CARVILLE: Well, I have to make a confession here. I'm a big admirer of Mrs. Clinton. And I think your grandmother sees something in her that a lot of people who don't know her well don't see: She is a very soft, caring lady. That doesn't mean she can't be tough. A lot of people don't understand that when Mrs. Clinton came along, women were bursting into the professional workplace and, by and large, had to be tough. I mean, they didn't have glass ceilings then—they had steel ceilings. Nowadays, people tend to look at these women and say, "Gee, they're kind of abrasive." Well, these women are abrasive for a purpose. They have had to be.

PLAYBOY: Isn't it also the issue of how men are perceived versus how women are perceived? Hillary Clinton appears abrasive, but if she were a man, she wouldn't seem that way.

CARVILLE: Right. And I don't find Hillary Clinton abrasive at all.

PLAYBOY: Cold?

CARVILLE: No. I think that, for good and compelling reasons, she limits the number of people she trusts—and because of that, she is misunderstood. It feeds on itself to some extent. If people would take the time to understand her, they'd see she's warm and very pro-family. In fact, she's a lot more conservative on certain social issues than one might think.

PLAYBOY: Tell us one thing you know about Mrs. Clinton that the rest of us should know.

CARVILLE: Okay, I'll tell you something. You have all of these pontificating, lecturing, holier-than-thou Republicans screaming how pro-family they are, how moral they are, how people ought to accept responsibility. Then this great freshman class of 1994 came to Washington to change things. Well, the only thing they've changed is their spouses.

Now, what did Hillary Clinton do when she was first lady of

Arkansas? She moved her parents to Arkansas so they could be closer to her and be part of her family. Yet all these great Republicans want to put her down—they get on the pulpit and preach about Mrs. Clinton being anti-family. It's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of. Absolutely absurd.

And I'll tell you another thing—and my wife, who as we know is a Republican, agrees with me on this: We both admire the way the Clintons have brought up their daughter, Chelsea. They have done a magnificent job of raising her.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about the president's performance after the election. One of the first big issues he tried to tackle was gays in the military, but his strategy backfired, and he was roundly criticized for it. Was it a mistake to bring up that issue so soon?

CARVILLE: It hurt the president politically, so, yes, it was a political mistake. But I still believe he exercised some moral authority on the issue, even at his own cost. And I don't think we've seen the final chapter on that yet.

PLAYBOY: How so?

CARVILLE: Let's say that one day something happens and we need a president who can speak to the issue of discrimination.

I think President Clinton can use his moral authority to say, "I have stood up and fought discrimination. Even at a cost to myself." I don't know. Maybe it will happen after his second term in office. Look at President Carter. His insistence on human rights was vehemently criticized throughout his presidency. It affected his foreign policy and hurt him politically. But now he has the moral authority to represent his country on those issues. So, the act hasn't played out yet for President Clinton. We don't know where it's going to end.

PLAYBOY: We will ask again: Is this spin control?

CARVILLE: That's not spin. [Pause] Well, that is spin. But it's fact-based spin.

PLAYBOY: Okay. Another early problem in the Clinton administration was universal health care. It failed miserably. Why?

CARVILLE: Because we didn't do a good enough job explaining it to people. What happened there was simple: People didn't believe the truth.

PLAYBOY: What was the truth?

CARVILLE: That universal health care would have been cheaper. It is cheaper to insure everyone.

PLAYBOY: So what was the problem?

CARVILLE: We said we could insure more people and it would cost less money. And that is, in fact, what would happen. But the problem is, we were asking people to believe something that rubs against the grain of what they think.

PLAYBOY: Let's be honest, James. Even people well versed on the subject of health care would need a Harvard expert to decipher the plan the president put forward.

CARVILLE: Okay, but you need a Harvard expert for the current system, too, and people still can't figure out how it works. Look at Hawaii. About the only thing cheaper than sunlight and pineapples out there is health care. They insure just about everyone. The reason? It's cheaper to insure everyone because the costs go down as the benefits go up.

But the central question is: How do you view health care? Do

"If the Republican Party spent a little more time educating people, keeping this environment going in the right direction and bringing more health care to people, we could be a long way toward solving those problems."

you view it like food—where, you know, some people can afford to eat at a fine restaurant and others can afford only fast food? If so, should we be satisfied with that? Can we take the huge discrepancies in the amount and quality of health care we receive? If my baby were to get leukemia, would she have any more right to live than someone who can't afford health care? I don't think we're willing to accept that in this country.

PLAYBOY: Certainly no sane person would accept it.

CARVILLE: Well, that's not the way the insurance lobby looks at it. The insurance lobby is out of step with what most Americans want and need.

PLAYBOY: But getting back to the point, you're saying the failure of the president's universal health care plan wasn't his fault—it was the fault of those responsible for getting his message out?

CARVILLE: The truth is, I don't know if it's the fault of the White House and people like me who are supposed to get the president's message out, or the fault of the people in the media who are supposed to report on what's going on in this country. Like most things, I assume it's a combination of both.

PLAYBOY: Can the same thing be said for Whitewater? —

CARVILLE: No. [*Angry*] Do you know there have been more hearings on Whitewater than there have been on Watergate, Social Security and Medicare combined?

PLAYBOY: Apparently this is another hot button for you.

CARVILLE: People should understand that the Republican Party is using congressional power and spending time and money on something you shouldn't care about—i.e., Whitewater—when things you should care about—i.e., education and health care—are ignored. Let me tell you: If the Republican Party spent a little more time educating people, keeping this environment going in the right direction and bringing more health care to people, we could be a long way toward solving those problems. But the Republican Party isn't doing that, because it has a singular interest and obsession, and that's Whitewater.

PLAYBOY: That sounds an awful lot like what the Republicans said about the Democrats during Watergate.

CARVILLE: Exactly. So why don't they just admit that this is payback time? They're not doing very well right now, this is an election year and they need the fuel. I can understand that, so let's get on with it. I mean, does anybody in America believe that senators such as Al D'Amato are going to give one hoot about Whitewater after the November elections? Of course not. D'Amato is Dole's national campaign chairman, so they ought to make the Dole campaign pay for the Whitewater hearings. No, this is a purely political thing being dragged out just to help the Republican Party.

PLAYBOY: Then again, with or without opposition, how effective can a president be? Dennis Miller recently said that the president—not just President Clinton, but any president—doesn't really make a difference in how things turn out. The office, he said, is nothing more than that of a PR flack. A lot of younger voters believe that.

CARVILLE: Dennis Miller. I mean, so what? My gut reaction is that Dennis Miller is just somebody else with an opinion. But I believe this president has made a difference. Ask the 44,000 felons who've been stopped from buying handguns. Ask the hundreds of thousands of people who have family and medical leave today if the president has made a difference. Ask the 15 million people who get a tax break under the earned-income tax credit. Ask the

hundreds of thousands of people in this country who are not victims of crime because the crime rate has gone down—ask them if the president has made a difference. So you have some bigmouth flapping his jaws on national TV. So what? I mean, Dennis Miller doesn't know what's going on in America any more than he knows about flying to the moon.

PLAYBOY: But getting back to his point, there are a growing number of young people who seem to believe that one person, even the president, can't make a difference.

CARVILLE: I know, so I try to change the people's minds so they know just how much President Clinton has done since he's been in office.

PLAYBOY: So tell us what he's done.

CARVILLE: I already mentioned some of it, but Bill Clinton is also the first president since World War Two to reduce the deficit three years in a row. Also: 8 million jobs created, a sustained economic recovery, a record number of small businesses started, the Brady Bill, the assault weapons ban, the first—albeit mild—increase in students' test scores, and family and medical leave, which means people can go home and take care of their children and their parents. Then look at the rest of the world. Democracy has been restored in Haiti, nuclear weapons have been turned away in the Ukraine and we're working on peace in Northern Ireland. So far we've stopped the war in Bosnia—a war that has killed 250,000 people. Yes, in this process others may be killed. But I

hope very few will be Americans. Look, the accomplishments are there, the record is there, the performance is there. And the more we accentuate that performance, the more people will see the job our president has done.

PLAYBOY: OK, let's take a break and talk about the really important issues, like sex. Your character in the roman a clef *Primary Colors* certainly got laid a lot.

CARVILLE: Yeah, I wish it were true.

PLAYBOY: So that means, no, you didn't get laid a lot during the 1992 campaign?

CARVILLE: [*Laughs*] No, I didn't. Because I'm not as needy as all that. And besides, a presidential campaign is a lot of hard work. You don't have time.

PLAYBOY: Then explain this: In one of the more memorable scenes in the book, your character pulls out his dick and shows it to a campaign worker, and she says, "I have never seen one quite that old."

CARVILLE: That happened, but it was my shirttail.

PLAYBOY: You whipped out your shirttail?

CARVILLE: [*Laughs*] Yeah. I kind of stuck my shirttail through my zipper and said to this woman, "Hey, look-a-here." And she was a real cool-comeback person. She said, "Gee, I've never seen one so old." It was actually nothing but a shirttail. Hey, there's a lot of horsing around on a campaign, just like there is on, you know, movie sets or anywhere else.

PLAYBOY: So in reality, the campaign pretty much messed up your love life with your future wife [*former Bush campaign strategist Mary Matalin*].

CARVILLE: Put it this way: If anybody can figure out a way to have a love life when one person lives in Little Rock and the other person lives in Washington, D.C., let me know.

PLAYBOY: So how has life been for the Carvilles since the 1992 election?

CARVILLE: Very good. My wife is a really cool woman. She's fun, she's nice-looking, she's very supportive of her husband and has a real sassy flair about her. I mean, every now and then I'll be watching her at some social event or something and I just stop and

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think about it. Then I get this smile on my face and say, "God-damn, you old coon ass, you married you one hell of a cool lady." You know what I mean? She's really got it. Of course, that's not to say she can't rag on you pretty good and drive you crazy. But she has a *joie de vivre* about her. I really admire that.

PLAYBOY: You, the great Southern orator, actually had a hard time popping the question?

CARVILLE: [*Laughs*] Yeah, well, my wife wound up telling me that I was going to do it.

PLAYBOY: She did?

CARVILLE: Yes. She ordered the ring, and when she got it she told me, "You're going to ask me to marry you. This is where you're going to ask me, and this is what you're going to say."

PLAYBOY: Like if she were running a campaign.

CARVILLE: She runs me pretty good.

PLAYBOY: The wedding was in New Orleans, with Sonny Bono and Rush Limbaugh in attendance. Sounds like it was a sideshow.

CARVILLE: Yeah, Timothy Hutton and Al Hirt were there, too. I'll tell you one thing: Nobody had more fun at that wedding than I did. It became known in Louisiana as *Da Weddin'. D-A W-E-D-D-I-N*. Man, we had a great time. It started with a cocktail party, then when it was time to get married we just opened the doors and people carried their drinks into where the ceremony was. After the wedding we had a parade—and you know New Orleans loves a parade. We had a brass band, and everybody just kind of marched down Bourbon Street. People were throwing things and jazz music was playing. A lot of fun.

PLAYBOY: Do you consider yourself a lucky man?

CARVILLE: I sure do. I don't know what I did to deserve all this—probably very little. But it's like Jack Benny said: "I don't deserve this award, but I have arthritis and I don't deserve that, either." [*Laughs*] So I'll take it.

PLAYBOY: As we speak, your new book is ranked number three on the best-seller list—and rising. With the election approaching, the timing is certainly fortunate.

CARVILLE: Well, I cannot tell a lie. I planned it that way. And it seems these liberal books are starting to catch on with the public.

PLAYBOY: Why, do you suppose?

CARVILLE: I think people are sick and tired of hearing the Republicans and their people distort the facts, and now they're looking for—

PLAYBOY: The Democrats to also distort the facts?

CARVILLE: [*Laughs*] Well, they're looking to us to straighten the facts out. I think this book goes to the heart of that.

PLAYBOY: How did you come up with the title *We're Right, They're Wrong*?

CARVILLE: Well, you know how they talk about how rancorous today's politics are, right? Actually, I got the title from a speech Harry Truman gave in 1948. He said: "They're wrong and we're right and I'm going to prove it to you." So I put my own little spin on that.

PLAYBOY: Naturally.

CARVILLE: And I did that because Democrats have become so timid—and progressives have become so scared—that we are afraid to fight back. We don't take pride in any of our accomplishments. We're timid about our philosophy that work itself is sacred and noble and an inherently worthwhile thing. The Republican

ideal has become a chic fad, and we've forgotten the workingman. I want my message to the Democratic Party to be, "Don't just sit there—fight the Republicans. Fight for what we believe in."

PLAYBOY: Let's discuss your career. You hit rock bottom while working on the Gary Hart campaign in 1984. You were heading back to your hotel in Maryland. You were standing on a curb on Massachusetts Avenue in the middle of a rainstorm when your garment bag broke and all of your belongings fell into the muddy street. The story goes, you had about \$110.00 to your name and just sat down in the rain and cried.

CARVILLE: That happened. I could take you right now and show you the exact spot where it happened. I was 38 years old; I was trying to work my way into the campaign and didn't have much money. I wouldn't have known what a health insurance policy looked like if someone hit me on the head with one. But I did have more than \$110.00—I think it was something like \$660.00. And I called a friend and said, "Man, I can't live like this no more. You got to send me five grand. I can't leech off people like this. I'm just out." He sent me the money. I healed up.

PLAYBOY: How did you eventually rise above that?

CARVILLE: I have self-confidence, and I got that from my family. Even when I was a stone loser in life at 38, I never lost a sense

of confidence. And I'm not talking about the confidence to solve a calculus problem or any such thing as that. I know my limitations. But I'll tell you what: I've never wanted to be anybody in life other than myself. And that was before I became the husband of Mary Matalin, and the subject of documentaries and an actor in movies.

PLAYBOY: You credit your parents for your confident streak. What was it about growing up in Carville, Louisiana that made you so self-assured?

CARVILLE: I had a very happy childhood and just assumed everyone else did too. I can say that with every shred of honesty I have. I cannot remember an unhappy moment as a child.

I was lucky: I had a horse when I was six years old. My grandparents

lived down the road—I could stay with them if I wanted to. I was loved and never wanted for anything. And to tell the truth, I was kind of oblivious to what was going on in the world around me.

PLAYBOY: Until you read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Then everything changed.

CARVILLE: It's just that I had never really thought about things like race. I mean, you had white folks and you had black folks, and white folks got things and black folks didn't. Thus it was, thus it is, thus it shall be. And I didn't question it; it was sort of a benign world I lived in. I didn't pay attention to the fact that some people are robbed of their dignity.

But then I read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and what happened to Tom Robinson, and I knew instinctively that (a) it happened to a lot of other people and (b) it probably happened to people right around where I grew up—and that it would happen again. And that caused me to question what I'd always accepted. I was 16 years old, and that started a process that changed my view of the world.

PLAYBOY: Let's get back to the issues. You're one of the few people we know who would argue that the federal government has done something right. Why, then, do most people believe that we should shrink it, weaken it or do away with it altogether?

CARVILLE: Look at all the good the federal government has done.

"I don't apologize for the fact that the Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore—I celebrate it! It was a Democratic president who came up with the policy of containment."

In the past 30 years, 50 percent of the money spent by the federal government has gone to three things: defense, Social Security and Medicare. We won the Cold War; the federal government did that. The poverty rate among the elderly in this country has gone from 27 percent in 1965 to about 11 percent today. In terms of Medicare, the only health statistic that the U.S. beats the world in is life expectancy. These are historic, societal achievements. And in a country known for health care that lags behind its prosperity, the way we deliver health care to our elderly is the finest in the world. **PLAYBOY:** Still, some would say those gains have been made at the cost of our future. The deficit is at record levels, people believe we're taxed too much—

CARVILLE: Hold on. As a fraction of our economy, we have the lowest deficit of any industrialized country in the world, with the possible exception of Norway. And we've had the lowest taxes of any industrialized country in the world, tied only with Japan.

PLAYBOY: Then why do Americans think the federal government is failing us?

CARVILLE: Because the party that has created these programs and ought to be standing on a mountaintop taking credit for them—the Democratic Party—has turned into a bunch of well-meaning weenies who apologize for everything we do. I don't apologize for my party's giving us the healthiest elderly population in the world—I celebrate it! I don't apologize for the fact that the Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore—I celebrate it! It was a Democratic president who came up with the policy of containment. And it was a Democratic Congress—

PLAYBOY: Wait a minute. Most people credit Ronald Reagan with winning the Cold War.

CARVILLE: First of all, Carter started the defense buildup. And if you go back, it was Truman's policy of containment that did the Russians in.

PLAYBOY: That's not an easy sell.

CARVILLE: Fine. I'll be glad to give some credit to the Republicans. But, by and large, the Democratic Party came up with the strategy, and we ought to take credit for it. We ought to fight to be recognized for it.

PLAYBOY: More spin control?

CARVILLE: That's not spin control. That's just history. Facts.

PLAYBOY: Then maybe the Democratic Party should speak up more, because the majority of Americans believe the federal government is screwed up.

CARVILLE: Can you believe the environmental successes in this country in the past 25 years? Who beat the Mafia? I mean, who basically drove a spike through the heart of the Mafia? Who built the interstate highway system? Who funded the research that eventually defeated polio?

PLAYBOY: Let's guess.

CARVILLE: The federal government. There were two things I was scared of when I was a child: nuclear bombs from Russia and getting polio. My child does not have to be scared of either one. Who the hell do the people think did that?

There's a mentality in this country—and it's fueled by the Republicans and ignited by the press—that the federal government has never done any good. That's just damn crazy! That is totally, totally wrong.

PLAYBOY: In this year's State of the Union address, the president challenged Americans to take greater responsibility for their own lives. At the same time, though, he recommended the introduction of the V chip—a device in television sets that will block out certain

programming—as well as uniforms for schoolchildren.

CARVILLE: But those are examples of how you can—

PLAYBOY: Wait a second. Our question is, why do we need either one of those things? If we're taking responsibility for our own lives, why do we need the federal government butting in? Everyone knows it's impossible to legislate people into being more responsible. They'll either be more responsible or they won't.

CARVILLE: You know what? That's the same thing they said [*about integration*]. "You can't legislate putting together people of both races." Shit, you can't, but what you can do is legislate to empower people to exercise responsibility. It's just another tool. All the V chip does is let parents program their TV so their kids can't watch certain programs. That gives you, the parent, power to exercise more responsibility over your children. Shit, I may not want my child to watch, you know, Jerry Falwell on TV. Well, now I can V chip him right out. [*Laughs*]

PLAYBOY: If I'm a responsible person, I'm going to be that way no matter what you legislate. And if I'm not, there's no way you can legislate me into being different. So why waste time with things like the V chip?

CARVILLE: All the V chip does is give you another tool—an on/off switch if you're not around to turn off the television set. With the V chip, you can still be responsible for what your children watch.

PLAYBOY: What about school uniforms?

CARVILLE: That was just a recommendation, because the federal government doesn't really have anything to do with what children wear in various school districts. But if I were on a school board, I would be for school uniforms.

PLAYBOY: Why?

CARVILLE: It runs deeper than you think. One of the things we're losing as a nation is a sense of commonality, a sense of national purpose, a sense of experiencing the same thing. We're becoming increasingly fragmented by income in this nation, and that's a distressing trend.

When I was a schoolteacher, everybody was roughly the same economically. But not anymore. School uniforms take a lot of pressure off children. They may not be for every school district, but they will work for some.

PLAYBOY: You're talking about treating the symptom of the problem rather than the cause.

CARVILLE: Sometimes you have to treat the symptom. I mean, you can have an infection that causes a headache, so you take an antibiotic and an aspirin at the same time. In fact, people do it all the time. But, no, you're right. The best way to address the cause is to help kids do better in school and to enhance their education. School uniforms help in a minor way. Do I think they're a panacea? No, I don't.

PLAYBOY: Gordon Liddy told us the difference between a liberal and a conservative is that "a liberal is someone who wants to do good for other people with your money, not his. A conservative believes the best thing you can do for most people is to leave them the hell alone."

CARVILLE: Well, I'm a liberal and I pay taxes just like conservatives do. But you know, Gordon Liddy and people like him who say they want to leave people alone also want to make it illegal for women to have abortions. They want to make it illegal to buy certain kinds of books or magazines. The truth is, they want to have individual freedom when it suits them, but not when it doesn't suit them. So I don't know where Gordon Liddy gets off thinking he

"I'm not saying the self-made man is a myth. I'm saying damn few self-made men are Republicans."

pays any more taxes than I do.

Listen, I think we ought to help one another out. We ought to provide opportunities. We ought to have public education. We ought to make job training tax-deductible. We ought to secure people's retirement.

PLAYBOY: But, what's wrong with those who say, "Hey, I pulled myself up by my bootstraps—why don't you?"

CARVILLE: Yeah, I've heard that argument. But how many of those who say that have actually pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps? Phil Gramm likes to talk that way, yet I don't think he's ever earned a dollar that didn't come from the taxpayers. With the possible exception of money he got from investing in porno flicks, the man has been living off government paychecks his whole adult life. He's so hypocritical.

PLAYBOY: Are you saying the self-made man is a myth?

CARVILLE: No. Look closely. Some people are self-made, but not many of them are Republican officeholders. That's my point. A lot of them went to public schools and got public funds. If they're all so self-made, let them turn down the mortgage-interest deduction. Let them say they don't want it.

No, I'm not saying the self-made man is a myth. I'm saying damn few self-made men are Republicans.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about a few social issues. In *We're Right, They're Wrong*, you take a pretty strong position on single-parent families. Tell us about that.

CARVILLE: The two biggest mistakes we made in this country—mistakes that have long-term consequences—are: (a) promoting the idea that two-parent families are somehow irrelevant to raising children; and (b) Reaganomics—which, of course, we'll be paying for for about a gazillion years.

PLAYBOY: The Republicans are clearly responsible for Reaganomics. But don't liberal Democrats have to take responsibility for the former?

CARVILLE: Let me just say it right out: That sort of 1970s movement—which was basically a movement among a lot of liberals who said a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle—was just flat-ass wrong.

PLAYBOY: And yet it became quite fashionable in the late 1960s and early 1970s to try on a marriage like you would a sweater—and if it didn't fit, you got rid of it.

CARVILLE: Right. Well, this philosophy was created by the liberals. And I must say that conservatives practice it more than we do. [Laughs] They take advantage of it. Still, the people who thought it up were well meaning but wrong.

PLAYBOY: You're sounding an awful lot like a conservative yourself.

CARVILLE: No. I am a traditionalist. There's a difference. When you say social conservative, to my ear that's someone who is, like, antiblack or antigay, you know? A social traditionalist, however, is someone who, as I say in my book, believes that two-parent families aren't always possible but are almost always preferable. That's my opinion, anyway. Liberals must take responsibility for this whole single-parent movement. We were wrong. Okay? Admit it. There. Move on.

PLAYBOY: You also call yourself a fiscal liberal. Care to explain that?

CARVILLE: I believe government should invest in its people. After all, the most valuable, most sacred thing you can give—other than your life—is your labor. And the government has a responsibility to see that people can make the most of themselves. So the programs that are most sacred to me are the ones that reward work, the ones that give people an opportunity to enhance their ability to work and the ones that give people security after they retire.

PLAYBOY: But how do you answer the Republican charge that a lot of people take unfair advantage of these programs—that they are stealing from the government?

CARVILLE: Hey, I'm not going to say there's not waste. I'm not going to say there's not some corruption. But you don't get

rid of the federal government because of it. You fix the things that don't work.

PLAYBOY: You have coined a phrase about all this. You call Democrats who believe as you do "5–65 Democrats."

CARVILLE: That's right. I had a nephew who busted out of school and didn't have a job. And my mother said, "Look, there are only two acceptable things for a human being to do between the ages of 6 and 66, and that is to have a job or be in training for a job." Now, I didn't want to use those numbers because I didn't want to get a bunch of devil-worship calls about, you know, 6-6-6. So, I just arbitrarily changed the spread to 5–65.

Look, there's nothing that makes a statement about us as a people more than our national government, and that government should tell people that acquiring a job and performing labor is sacred and important. That government should provide the tools that we need to perform.

PLAYBOY: And the Republican answer to that is: You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.

CARVILLE: I know that. And I agree. But you ought to keep the pond full for the horses that want to drink. And we ought to tell everyone where the pond is. And if they don't want to drink, well, then we deal with that.

PLAYBOY: One of the things you talk about a lot is "a national sense of purpose." After he was elected, President Kennedy gave us a sense of purpose when he challenged us to get to the moon, thereby starting the space program. Why can't we have a president who will do something like that again?

CARVILLE: I hate to be a Johnny-one-note here, but if the economy were growing at four or five percent instead of two or three percent the past 30 years, maybe we could do that.

PLAYBOY: But what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Maybe we could stimulate growth by investing in something like the space program.

CARVILLE: I think there's a widely held belief among Americans that we just can't afford those kinds of undertakings right now. We still have NASA and some remnants of the space program, but it's certainly scaled back.

I like the space program. In my formative years, I felt proud to be an American because of it. I watched *The Right Stuff*—and actually read the book. I think John Glenn is an unbelievable hero. I loved Apollo 13. Realistically, though, I just don't think we're in a position to do much at this time.

PLAYBOY: So how would you like to see the future of our country play out?

CARVILLE: If I had my way? I'd like people to be more tolerant. I'd like people to have a greater sense of public responsibility, a greater sense of compassion, a greater sense of taking their lives into their own hands. The clash of ideas is not necessarily a bad thing. I just think we could be more civil about it. The fact is, we tend not to confront the big issues sometimes—the role of federal government, how we deliver health care.

In a democracy, particularly a democracy as mature and as great as this one, we ought to take the time.

PLAYBOY: All of that sounds wonderful, but how do we get there? And how do you and President Clinton plan to play a part in it?

CARVILLE: I'd like to see the number of children growing up in two-parent families increase by 20 percent in the next 15 years. I'd like to see a significant expansion in educational opportunities for everybody, which would lead to a wage growth in real terms of one-and-a-half percent a year. As modest as that sounds, it would take care of more problems than any of us can imagine.

PLAYBOY: Are you saying that just those two accomplishments would satisfy you?

CARVILLE: Yes. Those are my two biggest dreams for America. I'd put up with all the negative commercials, all the congressional bad-mouthing, the special-interest money and anything else I had to tolerate just to get there.





NATURE'S
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Tell us about the moment you found out you would be featured in the magazine.

What Was your initial reaction? It was my usual working day. I was driving to another city and the managers reported that my photos had passed the casting. I smiled with tears on my face, because I dreamed of being a famous fashion model all over the world... since childhood and now I have achieved everything myself.

Can you share your favorite shot or spread from the magazine and why it holds special significance for you?

I really like to spread it in Playboy magazine, Sweden, 2023. There I am sitting on the sand in Sardinia, in a famous place, Porto Pino, they are also called Dunes. I was alone with nature and with myself... I felt like Cleopatra... or the Princess of the Dunes.

When you're not working, what helps you decompress and relax?

When I'm not working, I often like to just go to nature, out of town, and cook something tasty and healthy, because I really love cooking, but not EVERYONE knows about it... but now everyone will know (laugh)

What's the strangest fan encounter you've ever had?

There was such a story when I was having lunch in Milan, on a summer playground and a person nearby recognized me and told me, "Anastasiia, I know that you like to drink lemon water in the morning, I learned this from your interview." I was very pleased that this guy spent his time and attention, so read my interview and it's important that he recognized me. That was cute.

What's the best "wardrobe malfunction" story that you can now laugh about?

On the set in Venice, on the Venetian bridge, when tourists were sailing on Italian gondolas, this February, it was +5 degrees outside, I was only in a corset, underwear, stockings, and shoes... it was so cold that I constantly covered myself with stockings this bridge and they broke 2 times. It was funny but after this filming, I became even more ill. What you won't do for beautiful shots and with torn stockings. Model life is like that.

What are some of your biggest dreams you hope to achieve?

Oh, my dreams. I have a lot. I have no relatives except my brother, who is now in Ukraine... and I have no parents, so I want to help more ANIMALS, those who need housing and

food. Create a dog and cat house, like mini hotels around the world. And of course, to have a mini-hotel off the coast of Italy for my dear guests and all tourists. AND THE BIGGEST DREAM IS THAT THERE WILL BE NO WAR AND everyone WILL BE HAPPY AND KIND TO EACH OTHER.

What's the weirdest beauty tip or trick you've picked up?

The strangest beauty advice was always that before the shoot, drink herbal drinks for 3 or 4 days to cleanse the body but drink a lot of these drinks... so that the body would be even more beautiful and fresh... and I like it because it's also healthy.

If you were stranded on a deserted island with only one accessory, what would it be?

I would take a long, large raincoat to the island to protect myself from rain, wind, and small animals at night. But in general, I don't even want to imagine this.

What's your go-to guilty pleasure snack?

Walnuts are very good for the stomach and if you can't eat well.

What is the absolute worst thing a man can do to completely put you off?

Betrayal in every way.

What advice would you give to aspiring models?

The advice is simple - STOP being like someone else. Don't do these plastic surgeries to be like someone else. To be YOURSELF and now it is already fashionable to be an INDIVIDUA AND NATURAL. If nature created you the way you are now, maintain your beauty with SPORTS, good and Healthy NUTRITION, and positive thoughts and you will be a RARE with a natural and pure body.

Thanks for taking the time to speak to us, do you have any last words for our readers?

We are all not perfect, we all make mistakes and sometimes we make other people feel bad, let's just make the WORLD A BETTER place. Let's try and appreciate

those people who are next to you now not only in good times but also in difficult times too. And I wish health to ALL of US. With Love, Anastasiia.









A black and white photograph featuring two women. On the left, Angelina Jolie is shown from the chest up, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She has dark hair and is wearing a dark, possibly black, halter-neck top and large, ornate earrings. On the right, another woman is partially visible, looking off to the side. The background is dark and out of focus.

The Myth of the Home- wrecker

Although it takes two to tango, the blame is disproportionately put on women when it comes to cheating.

WRITTEN BY DANA HAMILTON



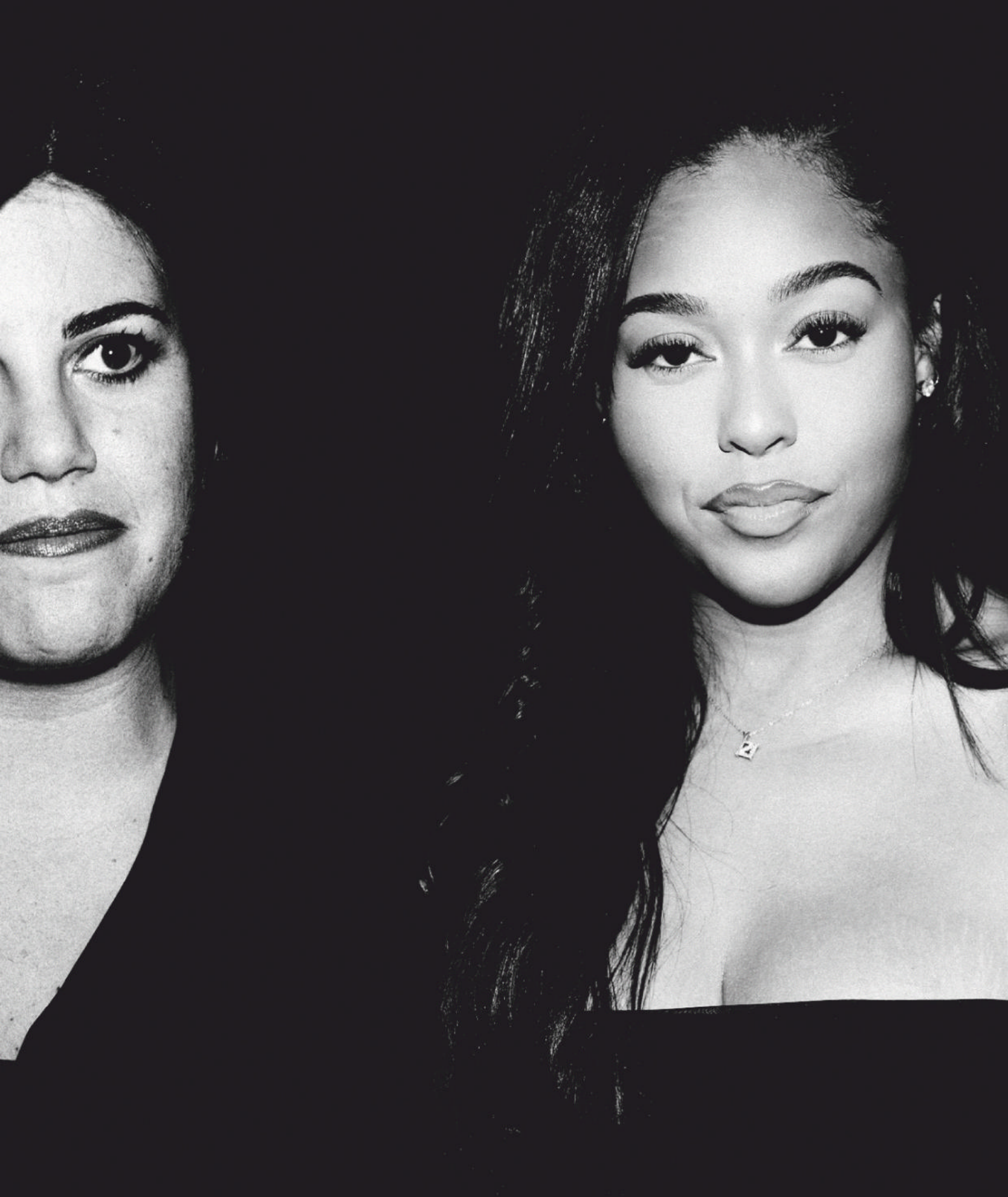
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America is obsessed with homewreckers. From Monica Lewinsky to Angelina Jolie to Jordyn Woods, we have a history of demonizing the (usually single) “other woman.” But why is significantly less blame for the end of a relationship put on the person who actually cheated?

There is so much vitriol for women who “broke up” a marriage. Let’s take Kristen Stewart’s case in 2012, for example, in which a celebrity magazine published pictures of her canoodling with then-married director Rupert Sanders. It was so explosive, Donald Trump tweeted, “Robert Pattinson should not take back Kristen Stewart. She cheated on him like a dog and will do it again—just watch.” Yet there weren’t tweets talking about the decisions Rupert Sanders made that ultimately led to his divorce. I had to google his name for this article because, like you, I had no recollection of who the hell he was. But that Trump tweet? Infamous.

Although it takes two to tango, the blame is disproportionately put on women when it’s two cheaters in hetero relationships. And it’s even worse when it’s a single woman “breaking up” a relationship—even if the “other woman” didn’t know the man she was dating wasn’t single. Homewrecking is an outdated notion—and I’m not really sure it existed in the first place. If a relationship’s foundation was already cracked enough for someone to cheat, there was no home to be wrecked.

About five years ago, the person I was dating slept with his ex. Did I blame the ex with whom he cheated? No. I didn’t know the woman, I didn’t know her story, I didn’t know why she wanted to sleep with the person I was sleeping with and, to be honest, I don’t think she knew he was seeing me. But it doesn’t matter. Even if she did know, I’m not angry at her. I feel sad that she would accurately assess the dude I was dating as someone who lies or someone who didn’t have the balls to break up with me or ask to open up the relationship before sleeping with her so he could be with both of us ethically and still decide he’s good enough for her. C’mon, girl, have higher standards for yourself than that dude.

I recognize that partners aren’t property and being in a relationship doesn’t turn off your attraction to other people. I wish I could say only people in bad relationships cheat, but there are plenty of people in good relationships who cheat too. Self-sabotage is a thing; when it comes to homewrecking, sometimes the call is coming from inside the house—from the person who built it.

When I got cheated on, I was angrier at the person I was dating than the person with whom he cheated. Regardless of why it happened, he broke our agreement. She had nothing to do with that. In our mutually agreed upon monogamous dynamic, women could have been throwing themselves at him and it’s still his responsibility not to act on it—or to initiate a conversation with me about opening up our relationship.

So why isn’t more blame placed on a partnered person who engages in a sexual dynamic outside of what they agreed upon? Why is there so little public smearing of people who decided to cheat rather than do the right thing, which is either end things

with their current partner before entering another sexual dynamic or openly communicate about changing the dynamic of their current relationship? Why is the other person—usually a woman—dragged through the mud? Homewrecker is defined as “a person who is blamed for the breakup of a marriage or family, especially due to having engaged in an affair with one member of a couple.” So why have I never heard a man called one?

We became obsessed with figuring out who “Becky with the good hair” was, but where was the public outrage against Jay-Z? He cheated on Beyoncé. Do you know what kind of balls it takes to cheat on Beyoncé? Huge. I’m surprised he is able to walk with them, instead of army crawling 24/7. But that dynamic is proof that the “other woman” is almost completely irrelevant to the conversation. If you’re already willing to cheat on Beyoncé, it doesn’t matter if it was Becky

Homewrecker is defined as “a person who is blamed for the breakup of a marriage or family, especially due to having engaged in an affair with one member of a couple.” So why have I never heard a man called one?

or Brenda or Beth—if it weren’t Becky, it was going to be someone else.

There are so many options to mend or get out of a relationship, so the cheating party has very little excuse. If you feel tempted to cheat because you truly want to build a relationship with the person with whom you’re cheating, end things with the other person first. But that’s often not what happens. People want to have their cake and eat it too. There are a lot of reasons people cheat: the thrill of it, seeking out a new person for emotional support or sex, or simply low self-esteem—they choose to fuck up a good thing because, deep down, it’s what they feel they deserve. In all these cases, just, like, go to therapy. If you’re causing harm (self or otherwise) in this facet of your life, you’re probably causing it in other facets too.

If you want to an open relationship and your partner doesn’t, that warrants an honest—albeit uncomfortable—conversation. I know some couples who have periods of openness and closedness as a means of compromise so both parties feel secure and happy. But the responsibility for that conversation lies with the person who desires to be intimate with more than one person. We’re not robots, but we have the power to control our factory settings for the sake of a relationship.





The Playboy Symposium On Race

At the start of Black History Month, Playboy convenes some of our greatest minds to discuss the ever-shifting meaning of race in the United States.

WRITTEN BY **THE PLAYBOY EDITORS**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **RACHELLE BAKER**



This is just the teetering edge of a reckoning on race in the United States.

began to quiet. Many eager tourists to Wokelandia remembered they had left the faucet running or didn't unplug the space heater and then departed as quickly as they had arrived. They returned to their regular lives, where it was safe and they didn't have to think about the problem we all live with.

But we cannot afford to lose the momentum from June. How do allies turn advocacy into lasting action? How do we turn moments into movements? We're in the afterglow of a new president and a new Congress, but hope shouldn't make our memories hazy. This is just the teetering edge of a reckoning on race in the United States. The history of our "democratic experiment" is one in which certain groups were crushed so other groups could advance. Dragging this into the light requires that white Americans stare unflinchingly into the moral abyss that forms the foundation of how America operates now.

Since 1953, *Playboy* has been a rich forum for ideas and a platform for thought leadership. In this Winter 2021 *Playboy* Symposium, titled *On Race*, four public thinkers share their lived realities on race. These contributors straddle a spectrum of industries and worldviews. But no matter where each of them come from, they approach the idea of race with a unique point of view. Patricia Escárcega, restaurant critic at the *Los Angeles Times*, examines the white gaze of American culinary culture. Leah Thomas, a sustainability activist and founder of the Intersectional Environmentalist platform, believes saving BIPOC lives and saving the planet are inextricably linked. Theologian Tricia Hersey, founder of the Nap Ministry, seeks the end of white capitalism through rest. Finally, Dr. Leana Wen, an emergency room physician and former health commissioner for Baltimore, asks us to see racism itself, in addition to Covid-19, as a public health crisis.

From the food we eat to the air we breathe to how we rest and heal, these essays explore how race permeates everything we do. This symposium isn't meant to be a blueprint for anti-racism, but rather a beginning. These sharp minds issue a call to action for anyone who claims to be against the status quo, where racism and inequality flourish. Progress will depend on our willingness to abandon it.

"Don't make it about race." It's a common gaslighting refrain when any person of color dares to point out the myriad ways in which this world was designed to perpetuate harm against them. The truth is, everything is about race. If you don't think so, it's because you haven't been looking. And if you haven't been looking, it's because you've had the privilege of turning away.

After the massive Black Lives Matter demonstrations of the past summer, after the flood of black squares on social media feeds and after the rush of organizations to diversify executive boards and candidate pools, the din



Getting

‘NUUD’

Is the hottest and most
pleasurable new trend!

NUUD Pleasures, a company based in Miami, Florida, USA, has created the first ever “VAPORDISIAC” product, which brings your mind and body sensations to the ultimate ecstasy.

From all-natural hemp-infused vapes that have innovated the sexual wellness space, to fun toys and aphrodisiac gummies, this company has gone viral with mega celebrities, musicians and more all wanting to try it out.

There are some hot new products that just hit the market that are getting people in the mood for a good time!

Behind the products are NUUD's founder Ethan Barak, an entrepreneur in several different product markets such as interior design, medical supplies, and real estate. However, with NUUD, he has definitely hit the mega jackpot!

We sat down with Ethan for an exclusive one-on-one conversation about how he was able to innovate an industry and the strategies that went

into making NUUD the hottest new thing to enjoy both in the bedroom and out.

• **Hey Ethan, let's start off by rewinding to where it all began. How did you get into the sexual wellness space and start NUUD?**

NUUD all started with a night out with some of my friends and while watching the mess around with that little blue pill and their nicotine vapes I was hit with an idea of a sexually enhancing vape. However, being that I am a person who believes in natural products, I decided to go into the research of developing an all-natural way to give our users an enhanced experience. With me personally I have always had a better sexual experience when smoking weed, so based on this I decided to combine a hemp derived cannabinoid with multiple aphrodisiacs into a highly concentrated oil to give both a mind and body experience so that both heads are working together for your ultimate pleasure. This was the beginning of my journey into the sexual wellness space where I have since learned so much and we have helped shape our brand for the many needs of increased pleasure for so many people.

• **How has NUUD innovated and disrupted the industry?**

Since coming into the sexual wellness space we have discovered that there are many consumable products for an increase in sexual performance for men, however there are few products for women and almost none that actually work. NUUD sets the

standard high for consumable sexual wellness products that deliver an extreme pleasure and performance for women and men alike. With our patent pending formulas for both men and women we are blazing a path of pure ecstasy for all.

NUUD also strives to create all natural consumable products that can be unique in both a sexual experience along with the social experience you enjoy with your partner. While most conventional consumable products like pills are catered for men, leaving the women with nothing for themselves, we at NUUD decided to create our featured product VAPORDISIAC which allows a couple to enjoy a sensual vaping session together before getting down and dirty in the sheets. This unique experience prior to the actual sexual engagement in itself is an arousal for many couples and also a much needed bonding moment.

That is what NUUD is all about, creating the moments together and ensuring that both parties have an ultimate experience.

• **How can your products help people to have better and more enjoyable sex?**

Our products take all 10-14 Natural aphrodisiac extracts and combine them into a highly concentrated oil form which we use to give a strong body effect. We also combine a hemp derived cannabinoid called HHC which give the user a nice euphoria, relaxation and focus. By combining these two properties of mind and body we have both heads working together for your ultimate pleasure. Women have stated being able to focus which has really helped them engage in more powerful and meaningful sex, while men have experienced being more at attention if you know what I mean.

• **What type of people have been buying the NUUD products?**

So currently our customer base has been about 70% women and 30% men.

What we have seen is that women purchase for themselves and their spouses.

Within the female demographic we have also experienced a tremendous outpour of love and recognition from women between the ages of 40-70. Many have written us letters thanking us for providing a product that actually works during a time when their body is going through so many things. They talk about NUUD in many of their Facebook group chats and let their friends know about their experience, it's incredible support! Coming to market this is not something I saw coming but let me tell you it is a great feeling to be able to receive such love from such a supportive community.

• **How important is social media when it comes to marketing a new product?**

Social media has been pretty much everything for us as obviously based on our market we are severely limited in the ability to do any paid advertising. Even with the social media reach we are still having to come up with new ways to better educate our market and get the word out there. We get banned and flagged all the time as our products cross 3 different regulatory issues such as Hemp, Sex and smoking. So we are constantly learning and adapting based on that, currently we are focusing heavily on education about our ingredients and how each one can help you enjoy the moment better.

• **What advice would you give to anyone looking at entering the sexual wellness space and business in general?**

When entering the sexual wellness space I would recommend only doing so if your product is truly unique as there are so many of the same things in this market. Additionally be sure to conduct thorough market research as this market is different from most of the markets out there and marketing is extremely challenging.

That last point is kind of true for any business, market research is a key factor that I believe may start coming if we don't take it seriously enough.

When entering a market you can save yourself immense time and money by simply doing proper research, talk to people, look at potential competitors and how they run their socials, what message are they getting across.

There are sooo many things to look for before coming into the market that if done properly and taken the time can be the difference between absolute success or extreme failure. Put in the work, don't be lazy and be prepared!







• **What new innovations and ideas are you working on right now?**

I am super happy to announce that we will be launching a brand new line of products that are hemp free, all natural and will have you going for 4-5 days straight!!!

Our secret ingredient is an all-natural mushroom grown in southeast Asia that has some of the strongest aphrodisiac properties I have ever seen or tried and let me tell you I have definitely tried this one several times and there is nothing even close to this performance on the market.

We will be launching these in 4 forms: gummies, little shots, and capsules and of course our signature VAPORDISIAC. The best part is they keep to our brand as well with provided both women and men an ultimate pleasure experience.

• **Who have been some notable models, celebs, etc. that have enjoyed the NUUD products?**

Due to the kind of products we sell and many people wanting to keep a low profile we try not to shed light on this too much. However I can tell you that if you look us up we are definitely featured in many adult scenes online as many adult stars love using our products before, during and after many of their scenes. If it's good for the pros then it's good for us all

For more on Ethan and NUUD, head over to: www.nuudpleasures.com

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